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RUTEBEUF AND THÉOPHILE

By Grace Frank

IN the second edition of Rutebeuf's *Miracle de Théophile* I suggested that an identification of the hero's misfortunes in the play with those experienced by the poet himself might be posited.¹ Restrictions of space in the series, *Les Classiques Français du Moyen Age*, precluded an elaboration of the subject there, but it seems worth considering further if only because it indicates the process by which so much that is sincere and effective in fiction may evolve from an author's projection of his own experience.

Whether or not Rutebeuf's personal lyrics are strictly biographical we do not know. Some of the troubles of which he complains may have been added for good measure with humorous intent. Needless to say, his difficulties with a skinny old wife, a blinded eye, a howling child and a threatening nurse would have no pertinence for the legend of Theophilus. Yet the emotional climate in the personal lyrics and the play is strikingly similar, and the feelings of poet and hero not only seem alike, but in both cases they bear the stamp of authenticity. One is deeply moved both by the plight of the author who suffers from illness, poverty, dependence upon charity, the results of his own disordered life, and by the wretchedness of the priest who has unjustly lost his position in the world, has fallen from his high estate into the depths of misery, and so despairs of God's grace that he is willing to come to terms with Satan.

The lyrics bear such titles as *La Complainte Rutebuef*, *La Povretei Rutebuef*, *La Prière Rutebuef*, *La Repentance Rutebuef*. Théophile in the play also laments, bewails his poverty, prays, repents. Naturally, Rutebeuf was dealing with a traditional legend, the terrible consequences of becoming desperate and making a pact with the devil. He was also concerned with a sinning hero who was an important churchman, not a pitiful writer and performer like himself. Given the difference in circumstances, however, it is remarkable how much of his own quarrel with fate finds an echo in the words of Théophile.

From the excerpts printed below it will be observed that both Théophile and Rutebeuf have given away their substance and remain the poorer for their charity. Théophile has been checkmated by his Bishop, Rutebeuf by his misfortunes. To both God's love seems inaccessible, His enmity apparent. They have both fallen into the toils of poverty and are ashamed to show themselves among their fellow men. Each is bitter at being in the power of others. How can they face death? Both have been tempted by the devil, both fear they will be damned. They confess to the vileness of their lives and beg Notre Dame, the physician who can cure all, to heal their

1. *Classiques Français du Moyen Age* (1949), p. ix.

souls. They admit that they are poor, naked and cold through faults of their own, but affirm that they have been led astray by the powers of evil and that only the Blessed Virgin can save them.

Strangely enough, Théophilus, the religious, uses the same figures of speech as Rutebeuf, the wandering minstrel. When Théophile complains of his misfortunes, he says that now indeed his *viele* is broken (36); when he contemplates making his pact with the devil, he thinks of the future in terms of a change of luck at dice (122); and when, with the devil's help, he regains his former high position, he mocks Pierre, the priest whose functions he has taken over, by saying that Pierre's fortunes have now been reversed: two aces, a losing throw of the dice, have fallen for him (348).

In the following columns the lines of the play appear in the same order as in the *CFMA* edition of the text. Beside them are placed pertinent lines of the personal lyrics, cited from Harry Lucas, *Les Poésies personnelles de Rutebeuf* (Paris: Droz, 1938).² It should be remembered that emphasis here is not on verbal parallels, but on similarities of tone and content. Other poems of Rutebeuf might have been classified as "personal" and might have been included, e.g., *L'Ave Maria Rutebuef*, *Un Dist de Nostre Dame*, *C'est de Nostre Dame*, some of the crusading poems, the *Dist de l'Ypocrisie*, etc. All of these serve to characterize the poet and many resemble our play in thought and feeling. But only those poems in which Rutebeuf speaks most directly of himself are listed so as not to extend this inquiry unduly.

	Miracle de Théophile	Poésies personnelles
Lines		
3	Tout ai doné et despendu	Et cil trop a tart se repent Qui trop a mis
4	Et tout ai aus povres tendu:	De son avoir por fere amis, (<i>Com- plainte</i> , 129) De totes pars pers je chevance! (<i>Prière</i> , 40)
5	Ne m'est remez vaillant un sac.	Il ne me remaint rien souz ciel: (<i>Gr. Y.</i> , 41)
6	Bien m'a dit li evesque: Eschac!	Et la griesche dit "Eschac"; (<i>Gr. E.</i> , 22)
7	Et m'a rendu maté en l'angle.	La sui ou le mail met le coing;
8	Sanz avoir m'a lessié tout sangle.	Dieus m'i a mis. (<i>Mariage</i> , 57)
9	Or m'estuet il morir de fain,	Or sui entrez en male trace.

2. *La Griesche d'yver* has been abbreviated *Gr. Y.* and *La Griesche d'esté* as *Gr. E.* The other abbreviations are self-explanatory.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 10 Se je n'envoi ma robe au pain. | Li trahitor de pute estrace
M'ont mis sanz robe. (<i>Gr. Y.</i> , 61) |
| 11 Et ma mesnie que fera? | Entre chier tens et ma mainie, |
| 12 Ne sai se Diex les pestera. | Qui n'est malade ne fainie,
Ne m'ont laissié deniers ne gages. (<i>Povretei</i> , 13) |
| 15 [Dieu] me fet l'oreille sorde, | De totes pars Dieus me guerroie, (<i>Prière</i> , 39) |
| 22 Je ne m'en puis pas a Dieu prendre, | Je cuit que Dieus li debonaires |
| 23 C'on ne puet a lui avenir. | M'aime de loing; (<i>Mariage</i> , 54) |
| 34 Laz, chetis! et je sui es laz | Quant je sui en mes laz cheüs. (<i>Complainte</i> , 48) |
| 35 De povreté et de soufrete. | Por povreté qui moi aterre. . . (<i>Gr. Y.</i> , 4) |
| 39 Je n'oserai nului veoir, | L'en ne savra ja ou je mains
Por ma poverté. |
| 40 Entre gent ne devrai seoir, | Ja n'i sera ma porte ouverte, |
| 41 Que l'en m'i mousterroit au doi. | Quar ma meson est trop deserte
Et povre et gaste. (<i>Mariage</i> , 99) |
| 68 C'est ce qui me fet esbahir. | J'ai vescu de l'autrui chatei |
| 69 Salatin, biaux tres douz amis, | Que hon m'a creü et presté; |
| 70 Quant en autrui dangier sui mis | Or me faut chacuns de creance, |
| 71 Par pou que li cuers ne m'en crieve. | C'om me seit povre et endetei. (<i>Povretei</i> , 7) |
| 101 Ha! laz, que porrai devenir? | Puisque morir voi foible et fort, |
| 102 Bien me doit li cors dessener | Comment prendrai en moi confort |
| 103 Quant il m'estuet a ce venir. | Que de mort me puisse desfendre? (<i>Repentance</i> , 61) |
| 122 Bien me seront li dé changié | Li dé m'assailent et desfient (<i>Gr. Y.</i> , 56) |
| 141 Je li claim cuite, | Je les claim quite. (<i>Gr. Y.</i> , 75) |
| | Je te claim cuite. (<i>Mariage</i> , 16) |
| 406 Molt felonessse rente m'en rendront mi rentier, | De male rente m'a renté
Mes cuers, (<i>Repentance</i> , 45) |

- 413 Or sui je mal baillis et m'ame mal
baillie!
Dont je sui mors et maubailliz. (*Po-
vrete*, 30)
- 446 Mes trop tost fui tempez.
447 Par celui qui atise
448 Le mal, et le bien brise,
Dont anemis m'a enchanté,
Et m'ame mise en orienté
Por mener a felon repere. (*Repentance*,
40)
- 449 Sui trop fort enchantez.
450 Car me desenchantez,
453 Ou de granz orgentez
Et m'ame mise en orienté (*Repentance*,
41)
- 454 Sera mes cors rentez
De male rente m'a renté
Mes cuers. . . (*Repentance*, 45)
- 516 En vilté, en ordure,
517 En vie trop obscure
Ainz ai mis mon entendement
En geu et en esbatement, (*Repentance*,
7)
- 518 Ai esté lonc termine;
J'ai fet au cors sa volenté; (*Repentance*,
37)
- 519 Roïne nete et pure,
Trop ai en mauvés leu marchié (*Gr. Y.*,
73)
- 520 Quar me pren en ta cure
Je sai une fisiciene, [Nostre Dame]
(*Repentance*, 49)
- 521 Et si me medecine.
Si com c'est voirs, si praigne en cure
Ma lasse d'ame crestiene! (*Repentance*,
59)
- 543 Theophile, li entrepris
C'or sui povres et entrepris (*Marriage*,
33)
- 606 Povres et nus, maigres et froiz
Povre sens et povre memoire
M'a Dieus doné, li rois de gloire,
Et povre rente,
Et froit au cul, quand bise vente.
(*Gr. Y.*, 10)
- 607 Fui par defaute.
- 611 La Dame qui les siens avoie
Tout va sa voie.
Li enviait que j'envioie
M'ont avoie quanques j'avoie
Et forvoié,
Et fors de voie desvoié. (*Gr. Y.*, 42)
- 612 M'a desvoié de male voie
Se por moi n'est au jugement
Cele ou Dieus prist aombrement,
Mau marchié pris au paumoier. (*Re-
pentance*, 10)
- 613 Ou avoiez
- 614 Estoie, et si forvoiez
- 615 Qu'en enfer fusse convoiez
616 Par le deable,

The date of many of Rutebeuf's poems is uncertain. Faral would place the *Miracle de Théophile* in 1261, believing that the references to Cahu and Salatin indicate the author's preoccupation with the Saracen infidels at a time when the West was definitely menaced and that a few likenesses of phrase between the play and such poems as *Du Sacristain et de la femme au chevalier*, the *Complainte de Guillaume de Saint-Amour*, the *Voie de Paradis* and the *Dit de Pouille* (he dates the first three poems ca. 1260 and the last in 1265) point to the same time.³ Although this date, 1261, seems likely, Rutebeuf's use of two proper names as well known as those of Cahu and Salatin, not to mention his constant repetition throughout his works of similar phrases, rhymes and verbal quibbles, make Faral's reasoning somewhat tenuous. One is on firmer ground, I believe, with the similarity of content discussed above. The transference of the poet's own feelings to the protagonist of his play may of course have occurred at any time in his own life. But two of the personal lyrics can be dated: the *Mariage Rutebeuf* was written in 1261 N.S. and presumably its sequel, the *Complainte Rutebeuf*, was composed shortly afterwards. In both of these we find an emotional coloring very like that pervading Théophile's lamentations. It is therefore not unlikely that the play and the poems were written about the same time. One can hardly be too precise in this matter, however.

More important than the date of the play, it seems to me, is the evidence that a medieval author was here able to breathe life and dramatic pathos into a traditional story by identifying himself with another unhappy wretch who had fallen upon evil days and that, as in successful works of art of all times, both reality and imagination played important roles in the effectiveness of his achievement.

Bryn Mawr College

3. See *Romania*, LXXII (1951), 199-201.

THE LEGENDARY STYLE OF THE *DECAMERON*

By Enrico de' Negri

IN order to view Boccaccio's *Decameron* in its cultural perspective, it is traditional to refer to the *Novellino*, the French *fabliaux*, and certain passages from Cavalca's *Vite de' SS. Padri* and Passavanti's *Specchio della vera penitenza*.

In the *Novellino* there is a wealth of all kinds of *dicta* and *facta*; however the didactic and moral content is not encompassed in a central idea. Not really an autonomous work, the book fits rather into the category of encyclopedias and collections. Nor does the clarity of style compensate for the fundamental paucity of invention. The gulf between the *Novellino* and the *Decameron* is indeed deep.

The *fabliaux* are replete with pungent situations, but they make their point in other ways and do not impart the sense of constructive literary adventure that is characteristic of the *Decameron*. The wordiness of the *fabliaux*, as in goliardic songs, is foreign to Boccaccio's purpose. In justification of the "form," as he terms it, of his short stories, he observed: "None of them are so shocking that, if put into decent words, they would embarrass anyone." And even here, taking into account the disparity between the quality of the content and the manner of expression, his statement is valid.

The *Vite* of Cavalca and the *Specchio* of Passavanti at times manifest a sure touch in the characterization of sinful deeds and carnal temptations. With the help of these two *Trecentisti* we are better enabled to understand why Boccaccio sought protection from criticism by saying that certain equivocal situations were exposed to view even by monks in their sermons. However, the works of Cavalca and Passavanti, being late documents, are not the best introduction to the medieval tradition. Why not revert to the Latin *Legenda aurea* of Jacopo da Varazze, a charming and for centuries a very popular work, which Boccaccio knew?

The *Legenda aurea* takes up and brings to maturity a long tradition that begins at least as far back as Gregory the Great. It is a question of a real literary genre which, while assuming popular aspects, expresses theological and philosophical themes of an origin not the least popular. This genre—which I call simply "the legendary genre"—fulfills an exemplaristic and didactic function. Its well-defined stylistic forms had a longer span than is usually believed. Not only the fantasy of the Middle Ages, including Dante, but the very fantasy of the so-called Renaissance and of Boccaccio himself, as will be argued here, was expressed in legendary forms. In discussing the *Decameron*, we must first turn to the strange world of legends. What may seem a detour is rather the most direct route toward the world of Boccaccio.

I

To what kind of literary elaboration religious matters in the *Legenda aurea* were subjected can easily be seen from the following episode, which here is in part translated and in part summarized, following a proportionate distribution of the short prologue, the extended crisis, and the very brief epilogue.¹

"Andrew, Bishop of Fondi, although a bishop, allowed a nun to dwell in his home. The old enemy imprinted her image in his mind's eye so that, while in bed, he was consumed by evil thoughts." Now it happened that a Jew arrived in Rome and finding no lodgings, sought refuge in the Temple of Apollo. Although he was not baptized, in awe of that profane place, he made the sign of the cross. This act helped him escape unharmed from a nocturnal meeting of demons. At midnight, there assembled a crowd of evil spirits, and Satan, seated among them, questioned them and listened to the impious acts of each one. The first, kneeling in front of Satan, confessed having devastated an entire province with social upheavals and wars. "How much time has this taken thee?" asked Satan. "Thirty days," he answered. "Why has it taken thee so long to do this?" asked Satan." And without heeding the answer, Satan ordered the lazy devil to be flogged without mercy. The same punishment was meted out to a second devil, who in twenty days had produced storms at sea and had shipwrecked boats, and to a third who had wasted ten full days in bringing about only a bloody matrimonial battle. But the fourth demon, although he had used up forty long years, received completely different treatment. Satan, descending from his throne, embraced him, placed on his head his own crown and invited him to sit next to him. What had that worthy man contrived? Having attached himself to a hermit, he had caused him to fall into a sin of the flesh, "in lapsus carnis." And now approached a fifth and last demon. He recounted how much carnal desire he had infused in Andrew, Bishop of Fondi, for that same nun, "adding that the day before, at Vespers, he had succeeded in making the Bishop give her a caressing slap in the rear" ("addens, quod heri hora vespertarum usque adhuc eius mentem traxerit, ut in tergum eius blandiens alapam daret"). Satisfied with the good start, Satan ordered the demon to leave and to return and receive a special prize—"palmam singularem"—when he had succeeded in making the Bishop fall into more substantial sin. But the Jew, who had overheard the whole conspiracy, went to the Bishop and warned him; the latter repented and baptized his benefactor.

This whole tale, included under the title of *De exaltatione Sanctae crucis*, has its exemplaristic moral: the sign of the cross made by the Jew in the

1. Jacobi a Voragine, *Legenda aurea, vulgo Historia lombardica dicta*. Recensuit Dr. Th. Graesse, Vratislaviae, 1890. Editio tertia. The passages I quoted can easily be located under the title of each legend; therefore I am omitting superfluous indications. At times I myself have translated from the original, and at times I have made use of the rendition of Granger Ryan and Helmut Ripperger.

pagan temple leads to his conversion and to the repentance of the bishop. But the literary moral differs a bit; we can explain it by means of information supplied by the author himself. He tells us that he borrowed the plot of the story from the third book of the *Dialogues* of Gregorius Magnus and that he himself constructed the long episode of the meeting of the demons. But this very scene, with its wealth of invention and its vivid colors, concludes by turning even edification into a joke.²

The versatile fantasy which is mirrored throughout the *Vitae Sanctorum* utilizes a great variety of styles and content. The Byzantine tales are even more audacious than the Occidental ones. Let us then be satisfied with the Bishop of Genoa's offering. In the legend *De Sancto Paulo eremita*, for example, a large decoration serves as background for the martyrdom of a young Christian. "Placed gently on a soft bed, he is brought to a beautiful spot where the air is temperate, among murmuring streams, singing of birds and fragrance of flowers; but the youth is so well secured by fastenings entwined with flowers that he cannot free himself either with his arms or with his legs. Before him stands a young girl, beautiful and lustful; she pollutes the young man, whose only love was God ["ac impudice tractat juvenem Dei amore repletum"]. Experiencing in his flesh motions contrary to reason, and not having weapons to use against the enemy, he bites off his tongue and spits it at the impudent girl—and in this way the pain drives away temptation and brings about a victory worthy of commendation." It is clear how Da Varazze has framed the *motus contrarios rationi* (to repeat in Latin this double meaning worthy of the *Decameron*) within an expressly constructed literary scene which is a veritable garden of love.

If we are in search of episodes, we can glean a mighty harvest. We will confine ourselves to the minimum so as to keep at bay the "six thousand six hundred sixty-six demons" which might possess us. Not only are the erotic hints innumerable, especially with reference to the demonic temptations and the pagan persecutions of beautiful and pure Christian women, but there are countless sketches of heroes that can easily be transferred to Boccaccesque situations. Here is Quintinianus "ignobilis, libidinosus avarus," infatuated with Agatha, and desirous of marrying her so as to enjoy her beauty, better his own social position, and appropriate her wealth. But since the holy woman resists him, he sends her to a prostitute named Aphrodisia and to her nine daughters of equal turpitude, so that for thirty days they can influence her and in some way cause her to change her mind. Here is a sorcerer leading Theodora into adultery by this reasoning:

2. Da Varazze has lifted the pungent phrase from Gregory, who omits the first four devils. Cf. Sanctus Gregorius Magnus, *Dialogorum libri quatuor* (III, VII), in Migne, *Patrologiæ latine*, LXXVII.

On the comic genre of the Middle Ages cf. E. R. Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* (Bern, 1948); "Exkurse," IV, "Scherz und Ernst in mittelalterlicher Literatur," and especially: 4, "Hagiographische Komik." It seems to me, however, that the question is far from solved.

"What happens during the day God knows and sees, but what is committed at sunset or at night, escapes the eye of God." Here are the evil machinations of Cyprian. He was addicted to sorcery and it was thought he transformed women into mares and indulged in many other acts of magic. Burning for love of the virgin Justina, he had recourse to magic in an attempt to bend Justina to his will or to prevail upon her to succumb to Acladius, who had similarly become infatuated with her. He summons the demon and orders him to induce Justina to yield to him. Many times the demon visits the virgin until he succeeds in implanting unchaste thoughts in her mind and in leading her to the threshold of perdition by means of that sophistic reasoning which is used ironically in the *Decameron*: "What then is the meaning of God's command: 'Increase, and multiply and fill the Earth?' For fear, sweet friend, lest by abiding in virginity we set the world at naught. . . ."

The least that can be said is that a work like the *Legenda aurea* offered Boccaccio many suggestions and gave him such a lively subject matter that it was virtually impossible for him to resist appropriating it to his own use. It makes one wonder whether Boccaccio's fantasy was stimulated not by the real and therefore limited corruption of his time, but by such literary presentations as we have reported above. Hermits, bishops, nuns, adulterous wives, transformers of women into mares, equivocal reasoning, descriptive determinations were all there, eagerly awaiting the new touch.

Making light of religious subjects was in accord with the ecclesiastical practice of reaching the sinner, not frightening him away, inducing him not to consider himself outside the Church, or in conflict with its dogmatic tenets. The *Legenda aurea* is a work of edification rather than of mystic exaltation. It appealed to the great mass of transgressors and contemplated all imaginable weaknesses. If men and women who attained sainthood had the same temptations and committed these very sins, no one need despair because of his own failures. The *Legenda aurea* in its entirety is a casuistic compendium against despair.

This interpretation is justified by the use that even Passavanti made of the exemplary lives. His *Specchio della vera penitenza*, which is a long and scholarly treatise on the sacrament of confession, proceeds by alternating questions of doctrine with exemplaristic illustrations, embellished to suit the need. Passavanti, too, subscribes to the good rule of not discouraging anyone. With the usual list of examples at hand, he exhorts each sinner to revert "to the kind and compassionate Lord and most sweet Father, asking pardon and mercy with the certain hope of being heard as were the great sinners, both men and women." Similarly, "one should consider the usefulness which the soul receives from temptations, on account of which it should not despair or become sad." Everyone should turn to his confessor in complete faith, and in case of extreme urgency, if an ecclesiastical confessor is not available, should confess his sins to a member of the laity. *Exemplum*: "In a village of the county of Tolosa there was a priest. The

priest became intimate with the wife of a knight and they fell into sin." The knight becoming suspicious, resolved to take the priest to a certain man possessed of the devil who could divine even the most secret sin and was in the habit of admonishing the sinner in public. When the priest realized a trap was being set for him, seizing the right moment, he rushed to the stable and, throwing himself at the feet of the groom, "earnestly confessed his sin." When finally the knight had dragged the priest before the man possessed of the devil, the latter said, "Of him I say nothing . . . he was justified in the stable." This recondite verdict was only understood by the priest, who began to meditate again on the benefits of confession and resolved to lead a more worthy life. However, from a theological viewpoint, Passavanti is such an extreme Augustinian that he almost sounds like Calvin. These problems did not interest Boccaccio.³

Instead he could enjoy a tale in the *Vite* of Cavalca, one of those with which he could have cloaked his responsibility. Once upon a time there was a monk who lived in a cave in continuous prayer. But when the devil realized that the monk, because of his very perfection, was filled with pride, "instantaneously he took on the form of a beautiful woman." The temptress appeared to him and spoke, "and with her words she planted in his heart dirty and shameful thoughts." The monk could not resist temptation; on the contrary he "began to play around with her and laugh and let her caress his face and touch his head and neck." Just as the sin was about to reach its natural culmination, a host of demons appeared at the cave and ridiculed the poor man saying: "O Monk, you who thought you were about to go to Heaven, how is it that you have fallen so deeply into Hell?" Then the wretch "did even worse, he despaired and returned to secular life, giving himself over to all sorts of evil and becoming a slave of filth."⁴

Like this tale, a large portion of exemplaristic literature is intended to counterbalance the terrifying theme of human frailty. As Cavalca says, the sinner who despairs of himself falls into even greater sin. The presentation of amusing examples within the framework of Christian dogma and ethics becomes possible. This edification through joy presupposes a solid faith; hence, the humor never takes on a tone of destructive satire.

The *exemplum* finds its form in a spontaneous and simple way. One of the rhetorical devices most frequently employed is gradation, or crescendo. The two versions of the legend of Andrew, Bishop of Fondi, that of Gregory the Great and that of Jacopo da Varazze, are marked by the high literary skill with which, in the second version, the assembling of the devils is arranged in an effective crescendo.

The same device reappears in the plot of the legend of Saint Justina, already examined from another angle. Cyprian, who, at seven years of age

3. Jacopo Passavanti, *Lo Specchio della vera penitenza* (Milano, 1808) I, 96, 99-100, 188-190 and, on predestination, II, 18 ff.

4. Domenico Cavalca, *Vite de' Santi Padri* (Trieste, 1858) ch. XXXIV.

had been consecrated to the devil, and was conversant with magic arts, evoked the infernal spirit in order that the latter might help him bend Justina to his desires. And the devil sets about the task with his ancient boastfulness: "I who succeeded in driving man from Paradise, incited Cain to kill his brother, and caused Christ to be slain by the Jews, I who could shatter mankind, shall I not be able to let thee have one maiden and enjoy her according to thy pleasure?" In the dead of night he goes, tries, fails, and comes back to relate how the virgin had protected herself by means of a certain "sign." Cyprian urges him to make a new try, and the devil, after a second failure, reports to him crestfallen, again alleging as an excuse the awesome sign. Then Cyprian, disappointed, gets rid of the feckless fool in order to apply to no lesser a one than the Prince of Devils Himself. The latter attempts to weaken Justina by causing her to become delirious through a fever. Having appeared to her in the shape of a girl, he imparts some crafty advice against virginity. After a moment of wavering, Justina resorts to the always victorious sign. The fourth time, the Devil is resolved to use violence. "He leapt impudently on her little bed, and sought to overcome her with his embraces." But the sign of the cross caused the Devil to melt away, "*instar cerae dyabulum liquefecit*." Finally the Evil One starts to do things on a larger scale: he scourges the entire province with a deadly plague and spreads the rumor that the calamity will cease as soon as the virgin yields to Cyprian's lust. The terrorized people loudly demand that Justina be compelled to marry. But she turns in her prayers to God, and the plague ends. Nor is this all. At this point Cyprian transforms himself into a bird and tries to do himself that which the Prince of all Devils has unsuccessfully attempted. A second crescendo occurs, but may be omitted here. The first, rich and varied, illustrates this manner of building up the plot through skillfull gradation. There are three different lines of development, each of which increases in intensity: the perverse intentions of Cyprian, the diabolical arts, and the struggle of Justina against temptations, with some momentary wavering. The style is like a musical canon in three parts, each of which follows the other in well-defined intervals. The sign of the cross, with its divine power, has the role of a pedal note. In the hands of an artist like Jacopo da Varazze, even a naïve and popular device like gradation becomes a distinctly genuine style.

This style may vary and grow more or less complex. At times, legends which illustrate the same theme and reproduce the same plot are arranged in a series according to the degree of intensity. Even Boccaccio often proceeds thus; in the *giornate* with obligatory topics, every storyteller intends to outstrip his predecessor.

These gradations fill three different structures which constitute three main forms of legend, mirroring as many different kinds of examples.

1. The legend of conversion. This describes the swift passing from one

manner of behavior to another. Conversion is at times both gratuitous and meritorious; at times brought about by irresistible grace. Thus Cyprian's unexpected conversion. He amazes us by reforming as soon as the Devil discloses to him that no infernal art can prevail against the sign of the cross by which the virgin protected herself. Cyprian thus ends as a martyr of the faith, together with the woman whom he had so greatly harmed. The examples of conversion polarize the black and the white, the colors of wickedness and salvation, into two spheres in sharpest contrast. One sphere is filled with evil and nothing but evil; the other is a repository of all theological virtues. Here, gradations take up both spheres, but with a central breach, which separates them and creates a contrast between them.

2. The legend of the interferences which cause a soul to vacillate. Generally this type of legend has three sections. In the first, a holy soul, distinguished by its faith and its vocation, is introduced. In the second, the interferences and effects of diabolical temptations or of heathen snares, with the attendant waverings, are described. In the third, the victory of vocation and faith is extolled. In this structure, crescendo, as in the legend of Saint Justina, takes up, pre-eminently, the second part, where adventures of all kinds take place, and the novelesque and marvelous exceed all measure.

3. The legend of the firmness of faith and of intention. Here the body of the legend is a single crescendo, as the example of Saint Marina shows. A good man who had just been widowed retired into a monastery and exhorted his only child, Marina, to follow his example. Marina, impelled by an irresistible calling, puts on a man's habit, enters with her father into the same monastery, and takes the name of Brother Marinus. There she is delegated the duty of going out to gather wood. Her little journeys for this purpose lead her to make the acquaintance of a nice family, with which she occasionally stays. In this family there is also a young girl who is having a love affair with a knight, by whom she is with child. In order to avoid the disgrace of willful carnality she accuses Brother Marinus of rape. Marinus, without revealing her sex, without even attempting to defend herself, accepts with infinite patience all the punishing and humiliating consequences of this calumny, as well as the long penances that the Brothers impose upon her. Only after many years, indeed on the very day of her death, do the Brothers ever discover that she is a woman, when they go to wash the body and prepare it for burial. A variation of this theme is the example of Saint Margherita: making use of the same expedient, she also enters a monastery of monks and because of her piety, she is chosen to become the supervisor in a convent of nuns. A nun becomes pregnant and Margherita is accused.

It will naturally be asked how far the medieval forms of the example coincide with the Greek or Latin types, or differ from them. It should

however be kept in mind that the Christian example always mirrors Grace, that irrational and "absurd" value. The maidens who disguise themselves as men and enter a hermitage of monks are the imaginative counterpart of a firmness which has meaning only as a blessing, as the consequence of a gratuitous "gift." The examples of sudden conversion, with their character of compelling necessity, are clearly alien to the classical mentality. We must finally subjoin a remark bearing upon the examples of virtue reconquered through error, temptation and sin. They teach that the recovery of virtue after its loss, or the finding of it again after the sinner's straying in the dark forest, is not simply a return to the initial condition. It is something more, a new remunerative addition. It is the grave problem of the *novelty* of Christian redemption to which St. Augustine mainly devotes Book XII of his *City of God*. But since here we are dealing with *exemplarism*, i.e., a genre destined for a popular audience, it will be sufficient to mention the usual version of the question. Exhorting men to penance, Passavanti reassures them by stating that God "honored and exalted all the more those who had been the greatest sinners." Undoubtedly, not all the exemplum-writers were aware of the Augustinian and Pauline origin of that expression full of new hope: "exaltavit." However, the adventurous, dramatic, and even comic portraiture of sinners and sins cannot be understood without taking that origin into account.

Almost all of the *exempla* start at a very high point of tension: the bishop of Fondi takes a nun into his house; Agatha is entrusted to a prostitute; Justina is made the object of the lusts of a monster who, when hardly seven years of age, had been consecrated to the devil; Marina and Margherita are shown at the outset disguised as men; Passavanti's priest becomes, in the twinkling of an eye, intimate with the knight's wife; Cavalca's hermit appears in the story when he has grown proud of his perfection, a pride which is a diabolical sin. It is, therefore, a typical feature of exemplaristic prose that the narrative takes its inception from an already critical situation. Every author pursues the theme to the highest pitch of the marvelous that his imagination can conceive.

Nevertheless the legends are studded with realistic traits: true or false bits of evidence, but always precise; indications of time and place, descriptions of *milieux*, often worked out with taste and exactitude. Dante's and Boccaccio's concretizations, aside from their poetical worth, are no longer surprising when account is taken of texts like the *Legenda aurea*. In this literature, including the great *Trecento* writers, realism plays the role of an "intensifier," which is intended to increase the relative degree of the marvelous and prove that wonders and miracles exist and are constantly operative. *Realitas ancilla miraculi*.

Telling psychological developments in the *Legenda aurea* are cases in point. Mary the Egyptian, laden with all the lust of her native land, a public prostitute at seventeen, ready to pay for her sea-passage to the

Holy Land by placing her body at the disposal of the entire crew, is converted, and in the desert, among indescribable penances, expiates her sins. And to a hermit listening to her story she confesses: "During the first seventeen years of my life in this desert, I was tormented by the cravings of the flesh, but now, by the grace of God, I have conquered them all."

An eternal truth, which later inspired Petrarch, is well portrayed in the *Legend's* words: "That beauty which is not present either to one's ears or to one's eyes is all the more longed for, through the twofold stimulus of love and imagination. Whenever no displeasing object arrests one's eye, the thought of the existence of pleasurable objects arises. While the eye can neither explore nor judge, the soul in love pursues the object of its desire".⁵

How moving is the separation of Paula from her family when she, having remained a widow and offered herself to the love of God, foregoes all other attachments. She takes ship for the Holy Land: "She walks down to the harbor with her brother, her relatives, the members of her family, and—what grieves her most—with her children, who follow her and wish to prevail upon their tender mother. The sails are hoisted, the oars ply the waves, the ship heads for the high seas. From the shore, the little boy holds out his arms, imploring; and the girl whose wedding day is imminent, without uttering a word, beseeches her mother with tears in her eyes. The mother, with her dry glance directed towards the sky, overcoming her love for her children through her love for God, dominates her maternal instincts in order to show herself the true handmaiden of Christ. Her entrails twist in pain, are almost torn from her body, while she fights against her atrocious grief. . . . Meanwhile the ship continues to plough the waves and although all the passengers gaze at the shore, she turned her face away so as not to see what she could not have seen without anguish." What effect has Jacopo da Varazze intended to achieve here? He has portrayed the heroic struggle of perfect faith against the demands of nature. In fact, at the place where a lacuna appears in our account, he utters his theme: "All this the perfect faith endured against the rights of nature" ("Hoc contra iura naturae plena fides patiebatur").

II

One would be inclined to think that, with his open and boastful vindication of the rights of nature, Boccaccio accepts the challenge of Christian exemplarism. But a formulation so binding would be a betrayal of the *Decameron's* tone. Let us say rather that he plays with an erotic and jocular subject matter identical with or similar to that found in abundance in the *Legenda aurea*. Resorting to a trick common to the comic and satirical genres, he profits from the fantastic exaggerations with which Christian exemplarism supplied him, in order to stamp upon them a shape contrary

5. *Legenda aurea*, ed. cit., p. 273.

to that intended by Jacopo da Varazze, with the purpose not of humbling, but of exalting beyond all versimilitude, "the rights of nature." Let us see, then, what these rights of nature in the *Decameron* involve.⁶

With the emergence of the Romance languages to a position of literary dignity, love and beauty attained in their turn the function of a triumphant category of art. This category in the *Stil nuovo* and in Dante united earthly and divine love through progressive stages. At least, in an oft-quoted story of the *Decameron*, Boccaccio seems to incline toward the stilnovistic manner of interpreting the mysteries of love (V, 1). Here beauty is represented as a transforming and redeeming force which instills in the mind of the lover, if not a pure spiritual disposition, at least gentleness and an intellectual glow. Because of this stilnovistic influence, the exhibition of beauty, through whose course the force of love operates, occurs by means of a special display of details which are not at all displeasing to Cimone, the protagonist. He was a youth of beautiful features, but with such a coarse and untutored spirit that "neither by toil of the teacher, nor blandishment, nor beating of his father, nor study, nor endeavor of whatsoever other had it been found possible to put into his head any inkling of letters or of good breeding." But what the varied and repeated pedagogic expedients had failed to obtain, is accomplished in an instant by a sudden apparition. In a solitary meadow where Fortune had guided Cimone, there appeared before him a beautiful girl "with so thin a garment upon her body that it hid well-nigh nothing of her snowy flesh." Cimone is enchanted and gazes fixedly at her. "Thence he proceeded to consider her various parts—commending her hair, which he accounted of gold, her brow, her nose, her mouth, her throat and her arms, and above all her breasts, as yet but little upraised—and transformed of a sudden from a churl to a judge of beauty, he ardently desired in himself to see the eyes, which, weighed down with deep sleep, she kept closed." Indeed the episode culminates at the awakening of the beautiful sleeping girl; "seeing her eyes open, [he] began to look steadfastly upon them, himseeming there proceeded a sweetness which fulfilled him with a pleasure such as he had never before felt." The grace issuing from the eyes is as much a stilnovistic solution as is the transformation undergone by the callow youth. Here the flame of love causes his mind to unfold, here gentleness fills that mind, heretofore obtuse, with the nobility of its intellectual glow.

Nevertheless the story of Cimone, in spite of its stilnovistic beginning, with its deference to carnal beauty announces situations which greatly exceed the patterns of the *Stil nuovo*. Boccaccio himself seized the opportunity of giving a more adequate explanation.

Probably the great short story writer would not have discussed his own conception of love in the famous introduction to the *Fourth Day* if his

6. Also for the *Decameron*, at times I myself translated and at times used the translation of Leopold Flameng, with occasional changes.

detractors had not forced him to defend himself. But his argumentation was very feeble, clearly because a defence of his excesses is not possible in rational form. He brings forth the tenacity of love of "Guido Cavalcanti and Dante Alighieri when already advanced in years," and of "messer Cino da Pistoia when a very old man"; he invokes the examples "of ancient and noble men," but they are doubtful excuses which harmonize poorly with the fruit of his imagination. He asks the support of the laws of nature, but how many laws of nature are violated by his characters! He refers to his work as being addressed to an unlettered audience, but this act of modesty is repugnant to his conscience as an artist, and he lets escape a statement to be taken seriously: "In composing my stories, I stray not so far from Mount Parnassus or from the Muses as many may suppose." And then renouncing logic and reason, he entrusts his apology to a story, the hundred and first of the *Decameron*.

It is the story of the "green geese." A good man, prostrate with grief at his sudden widowhood, decides to lead an ascetic life and retires with his young son to a cavern in the hills surrounding Florence. The years pass in this solitude, he ages, and the son grows up without ever having even seen a woman. Now it comes to pass that the hermit, having to go to town, takes with him the youth, who, seeing women for the first time, with great wonder asks his father what they are. Hearing that they are evil things and are called geese, "not mindful of palaces, nor oxen, nor horses, nor donkeys, nor money, not even of anything else that he could have seen, suddenly he said: 'Father mine, I pray thee get me one of those green geese.'" The father energetically opposes the idea and the story abruptly ends.

Telling the story of the green geese, Boccaccio had in mind a legend which illustrates the firm and complete renunciation of sex and of terrestrial love to the point of absolute negation. It is the same legend which we have seen above and which reappears under the name of Marina, Margaret, Pelagia, Eugenia, Euphrosyna, Theodora, Apollinaria. This young girl dresses like a man, and repairs to a monastery. She persists in a heroic as well as absurd way in concealing her sex. In the Da Varazze version, the legend of Marina begins thus: "Marina was an only daughter. Her father, being widowed, entered a monastery; and then, dressing his daughter in man's clothing, he asked the abbot and the other monks to receive his only son into the monastery. His request was granted and the maiden lived among the monks, and bore the name of Brother Marinus. When she was twenty-seven years of age, her father, feeling the approach of death, called her to his bedside and told her never to reveal her womanhood to anyone." We know how firmly Marina kept her promise.

Boccaccio merely appropriated this *antefactum*. The story of the geese is patterned on a father, who being left a widower, "resolved to be no more of this world, but to give himself to the service of God and to do likewise

with his little son." Just as the widower of the legend shares the cloistered rule with his daughter, so the widower of the story shares with his son a hermitical discipline, and as the former asks his daughter to forget about her sex, similarly the second resorts to remote expedients to keep his son ignorant of his masculinity. And we know how Boccaccio proceeded from this premise. However, if the story of Marina is a legendary *exemplum* of Christian renunciation, Boccaccio's tale is a legendary *exemplum* of the impossibility of renunciation.

The story of the geese constitutes the real prologue and so to speak the ideal substratum of the entire *Decameron*, as much for the choice of content as for its formal elaboration. The love for green geese can induce a man to change naked women into mares for his pleasure, to visit a woman at night without destroying her illusion that her lover is the Angel Gabriel, to exchange his own wife for his friend's, for the reciprocal pleasure of the couples, or so much other mischief. All these cases, proceeding from a common root like the story of the geese, are bound to prove its validity and to maintain its exemplaristic nature.

The determination and function of Boccaccesque love are certainly not modern. Modern representation of love starts out with a dramatic turmoil, like the conflict between passion and reason. Either reason triumphs, as in rationalistic morality, or passion is supreme, as in romantic ethics. In either case, the modern rights of individual existence are affirmed by means of conflicts, interferences, repressions, sentimental and mental complications. Think only of the tortured waverings which determine the drama of Goethe's *Werther* and Foscolo's *Ortis*, not to mention the subtle intricacies in *Madame Bovary*. Love is represented in a complex and fluid state, in which are projected the family, the nation, social classes, mundane ambitions and religion. Love itself is split in its emotional generosity and in its sensual egotism. Sensuality is refined and becomes the bearer of special intellectual inclinations and different cultural preferences.

All of this has no relation to Boccaccio's "natural affezioni" and "leggi di natura." Boccaccio seems a simpleton when placed in this world of modern psychology. At this point let me refer again to the passage of the youth who for the first time sets his gaze on women: "Not mindful of palaces, or oxen, or horses, or donkeys, or money, not even of anything else that he could have seen, suddenly he said: 'Father mine, I pray thee get me one of those green geese.' " This is clearly a parable. It means that in Boccaccio's representations, love is isolated and almost extirpated from the thick and inextricable texture of psychic and moral reality and is maintained always in this impossible sphere of abstraction, without conflict, repressions, without complications of a mental or of a sentimental nature. And if many and fantastic complications are present in the *Decameron*, they do not stem from the essence of love or from those psychological and moral interferences from which qualms are generated, but from

interferences and incidents that link the *novelle* to the most diffuse genre of adventures. The word itself, *novella*, retains many of the meanings of the adjective *novum*, among them: unexpected, unheard-of, marvelous. Loosened from the bonds of the human lot, indeed unaware of them, love is magnified and proceeds toward an unreal and unlimited goal. Fancies of Boccaccesque love are thus brought into competition with fancies of religious legends.

III

The *Decameron* opens with a story which appropriates religious exemplarism to the purpose of jocular literature. Ser Ciappelletto has the following definite designations: falsifier of documents, perjurer, breeder of scandal and discord, homicide, blasphemer of God and of Saints, irascible, sacrilegious, frequenter of taverns, pederast, thief, intemperate eater and drinker, habitual and completely incorrigible evil-doer. Such a record would be found in no police annals in the world. Boccaccio too keeps this monster wide of the actual world; he does not catch him in the act of committing his deeds. He introduces him to us exhausted and on his death bed and summarizes in a few words the preceding events. Then he makes him commit a final and supreme act which is not of this world but the product of a soul which has already approached the threshold of hell. Ciappelletto goes to his reward after having made "to an old fashioned monk of the good old faith" a sacrilegious confession which enumerated the exact opposite of his sins—an extreme global perversion as only Boccaccio could dream up in its complexity and as only he could elaborate meticulously, point by point. Is this picture of a noxious person to be taken seriously? No, it is a joke and above all a stylistic joke.

A literary misfortune has befallen Boccaccio's Ciappelletto. His name has been identified with a tax-collector in the employ of Philip the Beautiful. Although nothing has been uncovered about the moral qualities of the poor man who actually lived, we are inclined to project on his shadow the Boccaccesque traits, as though they applied to the real man.⁷ But at the mere enumeration of the designations with which Boccaccio introduced Ser Ciappelletto, we realize upon whom he has been modelled. He is a brother and a caricature of that Quintinianus that we are acquainted with, "ignobilis, libidinosus, avarus," who is one among innumerable exemplaristic *compendia* of every vice and abomination. The first character in the *Decameron* is a caricature in the most literal meaning of the word, which implies the acceptance of a certain form in order to carry it to absurdity by overloading it with its very own elements.

7. See C. Paoli, "Documenti di ser Ciappelletto," in *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, V, 399 ff. As Paoli himself notes, from the bookkeeping of Cepperello Diotaiuti da Prato, it only results that the man with the funny name was a very conscientious administrator.

The caricature continues to the conclusion of the story and goes beyond Ser Ciappelletto himself. In this final act, we are at a church filled with people desirous of attending the obsequies of the man whose fame the confessor had already made well known. "The good man who had confessed him, having ascended the pulpit, began to preach marvelous things about his life, his fasts, his virginity, his simplicity, innocence and holiness." Then the corpse is placed under a marble slab and the following day the people light votive candles to him "and they called him and still call him Saint Ciappelletto."

It would be wrong to interpret this epilogue as an ironic distortion of religion. Boccaccio, instead, has poked fun at the literary flowering of the overcharged legends of the saints and the *exempla* of his own times. That is what he continuously repeats, saying that his stories resemble the tales recounted by the monks. Questions of faith are not involved in the present short story, where it is hard to determine whether the principal character is Ciappelletto, who deceives the confessor, or the confessor himself, who in his sermon concludes by elevating Ciappelletto as an example of "simplicity and innocence" and of other "marvelous things."

Catholic authors were bound to impart to Boccaccio a late but unconditional absolution. The Bollandists relegate to the domain of fantasy a great part of the medieval inventions of the lives of the saints. Barring works like the *Legenda aurea* from hagiography, they consign them to a special type of literature. In the story of Ser Ciappelletto, Boccaccio attained the results of the later Bollandist criticism, but with a difference which is of vital significance to us. The Bollandists master all the rational instruments of modern philology; Boccaccio, on the contrary, destroyed the contents of a legendary world by adopting the very same literary forms. To religious legend, he opposed not so much the arguments of criticism, but a similar manner of constructing tales by means of examples and legends. For the marvelous of religion which his Ser Ciappelletto parodied, he substituted the marvelous of love.⁸

IV

The oddities of Boccaccio-like love are no less fantastic than the miracles propagated by a literature in which the Bishop of Genoa excelled. Boccaccio's love forces exist only in fantasy and therefore, like the religious legends, taking in the *antefacta*, the form of a manifest absurdity, they start at a very high point of tension: a young lover suddenly undergoes physiological and intellectual metamorphosis; a little hermit is unable to distinguish between women and geese; more than one wife does not notice that she is in bed with a man other than her husband; an Abbess wraps

8. Very useful also for literary criticism are the works of the Bollandist H. Delehay, among which I mention only *Les Légendes hagiographiques*, 3rd ed. (Bruxelles, 1927).

the priest's breeches around her head; a young merchant, mystified by empty chatter, thinks he recognizes a prostitute to be his sister and experiences her sisterly love; Griselda is endowed with such docility that critics find the story absurd and meaningless. What more could Boccaccio have done in order to emphasize the legendary character of his inventions? Indeed, we shall find that the *Decameron* reproduces the three structures of the legends: that of conversions, that of adventures generated by unexpected interferences, and that of firmness.

1. Two of Boccaccio's miracles have already been discussed. They were exemplifications of the sudden passing from one moral state to another because of an irresistible compulsion. Cimone and the little Florentine hermit are physically and morally changed as soon as they are touched by the grace of femininity. "Love's arrow having, then, through Iphigenia's beauty, penetrated into Cimone's heart, whereinto no teaching had ever availed to win an entrance, in a very brief time, proceeding from one idea to another, he made his father marvel and all his kinsfolk and every other that knew him." It is a question, obviously, of conversion; in fact Boccaccio has adhered to their traditional type, polarizing contrasting colors. Prior to his meeting with Beauty, Cimone is presented as an uncivilized being with "a rough and uncouth voice" and "manners more befitting a beast than a man"; subsequently "he first, to the utmost wonderment of everyone, in a very brief space of time, not only learned the first [elements of] letters, but became very eminent among the students of philosophy, and afterward (the love which he bore Iphigenia being the cause of all this) he not only reduced his rude and rustical manner of speech to seemliness and civility, but became a past master of song and sound and exceeding expert and doughty in riding and martial exercises, both by land and by sea." Similarly, previous to his meeting with the geese, the little hermit is all imbued with the "glories of eternal life and of God and the Saints"; subsequently, he initiates certain things which the author of the *Decameron* does not need to relate.

In addition to these examples, others may be quoted, even though here conversion does not constitute the dominant *motif* of the short story. A wife, loyal to and jealous of her husband, finds herself in bed with Ricciardo Minutolo (III, 6), without either knowing or intending it. When she realizes it, she first flies into a temper, then reconciles herself to the situation; "having thus learned how much more savory were the lover's kisses than those of the husband and her former rigor being changed into kind love-liking for Ricciardo, from that day forth she loved him very tenderly and thereafter, ordering themselves with the utmost discretion, they many a time had joyance of their loves." This happy wisdom in converting one's own conduct of life presupposes, as we have seen, an absolute isolation of love from any moral or psychological interference, an isolation in which qualms and cases of conscience are eliminated.

We shall now extend definitely the designation *exemplum* from religious and moral prose to that of the *Decameron*: nor could we do otherwise. Whatever we say in regard to Boccaccesque love, to its organization and concretization, is to be seen only *per exempla*. The exemplaristic form is recognizable at once. In it the theme is wholly bare and may be cast in numberless figurations, in order constantly to re-emerge with its fixed, hammering character. In the *Decameron*, likewise, the original motif is continuously reaffirmed with an insistent and often brutal constancy. The Boccaccesque lovers are involved, couple by couple, in dissimilar adventures, and, because of this, each short story has its own value; but, unless they are betrayed by a cruel injustice (IV, 1), they invariably end in bed, or in an embrace on a bench (VIII, 8) or even in less comfortable places (VII, 2). With this primitive and simple act every short story returns to the primitive and simple root from which all these tales draw their vital sap and pattern. This hammering character is especially evident in the second exemplaristic structure, that of interferences and adventures.

2. Let us take a really extreme case (IX, 2), since it is imagined as occurring in a convent "very famous for sanctity and religion." An enamored nun finds a way of bringing to fruition at nighttime her own desires and those of her suitor. Unfortunately, the other nuns notice it. Having trapped the sinner, they knock at the door of the Abbess, without suspecting what she may be doing. The Abbess dresses in a hurry, rushes out of her room, summons the Chapter, and, sitting in judgment, has the young peccant colleague dragged before her. Terrible reproaches rain down upon the culprit, until the latter, pointing to the Abbess's coif, causes the whole audience to realize that her kerchief is the breeches of the priest. The Abbess "changed her note and proceeding to speak after a fashion altogether different from her beginning, came to the conclusion that it is impossible to withstand the pricks of the flesh, wherefore she said that each should, whenas she might, privily give herself a good time, even as it had been done until that day. Accordingly, setting the young lady free, she went back to sleep with her priest and Isabetta returned to her lover, whom many a time thereafter she let come thither, in despite of those who envied her, whilst those of the others who were loverless pushed their fortunes in secret, as best they knew." From that day on, the demands and rights of nature triumphed in the convent.

The short story of the nun and the Abbess offers an opportunity to bring into better focus the structure of the second exemplaristic pattern. The theme is posited: here the sensual gratification of a nun who does not aspire to sanctity, elsewhere the perfect vocation of a saintly woman. Forces contrary to the thematic thesis are made to intervene: here the opponents of the rights of nature, elsewhere diabolical temptations or heathen snares. The "upset" arising therefrom is subsequently described with a gradual adventurous crescendo, and driven to its uttermost point. Finally, the

denouement occurs with the return of the initial thematic motif, which triumphs over all.

According to a similar scheme, love overcomes the obstacles of its opponents, whether powerful individuals, social conditions, or fortune. Consider, for instance, the general title of the whole *Second Day*, where they discourse "of those who after being baffled by divers chances have won at last to a joyful issue beyond their hope"; or of the whole *Fifth Day* where they reason "of that which hath happily betided lovers after sundry cruel and misfortunate adventures."

Very often the artistic value of a short story is entirely unfolded in the central part, with adventures between which it is hard to find a connection, beyond that novelesque and *merveilleux* element which, in Italian literature, persists at least down to Tasso. It is enough to reread the résumés of two quite well-known tales (V, 2 and 3): "Costanza loveth Martuccio Gomito and hearing that he is dead, embarketh for despair alone in a boat, which is carried by the wind to Susa. Finding her lover alive at Tunis, she discovereth herself to him and he, being great in favor with the king for counsels given, espouseth her and returneth rich with her to Lipari." The adventures which occur are truly novel-like: piratic raids, imprisonments, young girls trained in the art of sailing, death-resolutions, fatal navigations, miraculous rescues, good, hospitable old crones, wars between Spaniards and Saracens, stratagems for the winning of battles, a prisoner freed by the King's generosity, final turns of fortune. Similarly, in the other tale: "Pietro Boccamazza, fleeing with Agnoletta, falleth among thieves; the girl escapeth through a wood and is led by fortune to a castle, whilst Pietro is taken by the thieves, but presently, escaping from their hands, winneth, after divers adventures, to the castle where his mistress is and espousing her, returneth with her to Rome." Here also, all the ingredients of the medieval romance are present: flights, robbers, wanderings through fearsome forests, old men endowed with chivalric speech, castles, sudden turns of fate, and, finally, a happy wedding. Love seems to get lost and actually gets lost in these fancies of non-erotic character, which are probably preponderant in the *Decameron*. A more complete study of this work should consider them more widely. We refer to this subject in order to forestall the impression that an excessive eroticization of our subject may have been intended. However, the assertion that love gets lost is true, if by love we mean exclusively a psychological reality. But, as a literary theme or scheme, as a *topos* of Boccaccio's art, love is constantly present. It imparts to novelesque adventures a rule of economy which cannot be overstepped, and a direction whereby the manifold scattered strands of the novel are connected again in the final reunion of the two lovers.

Even when a short story illustrates a collateral and complementary motif of the thematic matrix, Boccaccio is not satisfied until, after the strangest deviations, that matrix reappears to crown the work, as in the

long tale which could be called the tale of the *anti-qualm* (III, 7). The appellation is suggested by the fact that it clarifies, with exemplaristic lucidity, a point of our interpretation upon which we have already tarried. Tebaldo loves and is loved in return with all the joy of youth. No obstacle hinders the present and future happiness of the couple. Unexpectedly, the usual friar meddles: "When I told him of the love I bore Tebaldo and the privacy I had with him, the friar made such a racket about my ears that I tremble yet to think of it, telling me that, and I desisted not therefrom, I should go in the devil's mouth to the deepest deep of hell and there be cast into everlasting fire." Overcome, then, by a thousand qualms, the girl breaks off the relationship and consents to become the bride of Aldobrandino Palermini, with whom she lives out her life normally. Sad and humiliated, Tebaldo leaves Florence for faraway countries. One fine day, longing leads him back to his city, where he arrives in pilgrim's garb, so that no one recognizes him. He arrives in the very nick of time in order to remedy the late but ruinous consequences of the friar-induced qualms of the woman who once belonged to him. Some days before, by a unanimous error, people had recognized in the corpse of a murdered man Tebaldo himself. Justice arrests Aldobrandino, the husband of the woman, since her past life was known, and he is charged with vendetta and homicide. The woman is in tears, torn between the memory of her first love and her attachment to her husband. Tebaldo's four brothers, who insist upon pressing the charges, are in mourning, and a bloody quarrel is about to break out between prominent families. It is now Tebaldo's turn to disclose his existence and to give evidence of active intervention. At first, he arouses the woman's astonishment by dropping in upon her unexpectedly and by cursing, along with her, friars and false qualms of conscience. Then he plans to free her innocent husband, next he puts an end to the mourning of his brothers and pacifies them. Finally, a great general dinner—men and women—crowns the happy outcome. Is everything over? No. The interlude of qualms and of their consequences is closed, and the two lovers, "long discreetly dealing, had enjoyment of their love. God grant us to enjoy ours."

Boccaccio's leading strand is not always love. Sometimes Fortune takes over the main role; thus in the tales of Andreuccio da Perugia (II, 5) and of Nicolò da Cignano (VIII, 10), although females play a counterpart in them. Merchants both, Andreuccio and Nicolò, with well-lined purses, have arrived in a great city full of allurements and dangers. Through more than the ordinary Boccaccesque accidents they are stripped down to the last penny. But through just as many accidents and crafty tricks they recover all they have lost, even to the last penny. Everyone knows that Andreuccio "returned to Perugia, having invested his money in a ring, whereas he came to buy horses." Here, too, the same narrative rhythm is repeated: theme of the tale (money), opposite forces and various accidents

(complete loss of financial belongings), integral return to the thematic state (recovery of the initial fortune).

In his stories, Boccaccio employs a stylistic and linguistic scale which descends to the forms of homely dialogue, to dialectal terms, to obscene *double-entente*. The *Legenda aurea* too is rife with scenes that are anything but courtly. Here is another one, to refresh the reader's memory. Publius falls in love with Anastasia, and not being able to obtain his purpose with her, tries to compensate with the kitchenmaids. He tries to have his will with them, but, being providentially struck with insanity, proceeds to embrace bean-pots, frying pans, and copper kettles: "cacabos, patellas caldaria et similia amplectens osculabatur." He emerges all smeared with black, disfigured, and with garments torn to pieces: "nigerrimus et deformis et vestimentis concisis." Such or similar language is to be found in the *Decameron*. From the rarefied and dreamy atmosphere of the gardens where, with courtly elegance, seven Florentine gentlewomen and three gentlemen relate alluring tales, sing their songs, exchange lively and at the same time polite compliments, without descending to less than correct actions, we seem to have reached a cynical realism—even though the foolish unreality of the tales remains in full validity.⁹

In order to solve this contradiction, we shall resort to the help of a very silly female (IV, 2). Boccaccio's Lisetta personifies a mixture of vanity, sensuality, and perverse religiousness. She fancies that the only lover worthy of her beauty is the Angel Gabriel, and a criminal and shameless confessor finds a way to visit her at night without destroying her illusion. Lisetta is unable to refrain from confiding to a gossip of her acquaintance the amorous record of which she can boast. This confidence is something extremely delicate, especially from the angle of the narrative art. Here, from the most impossible of all *antefacts*, is about to arise a dialogue which seems to approach the tone of prattle between old gossips. In other words, here the impossible is about to receive a very daring appearance of possibility:

However, it chanced one day that Madam Lisetta, being in dispute with a gossip of hers upon the question of female charms, to set her own above all others, said, like a woman who had little within her noodle, "An you but knew whom my beauty pleaseth, in truth you would hold your peace of other women." The other, longing to hear, said, as one who knew her well, "Madam, maybe you say sooth; but, knowing not who this may be, one cannot turn about so lightly." Thereupon quoth Lisetta, who was eath enough to draw, "Gossip, believe it or not, but he I mean is the angel Gabriel, who loveth me more than himself, as the fairest lady (for that which he telleth me) who is in the world or the Maremma [a wild and

9. For this continuous alternating of the Christian-Medieval style between a *sermo sublimis* and a *sermo humilis*, see E. Auerbach, *Mimesis, dargestellte Wirklichkeit in der abendländischen Literatur* (Berne, 1946) and especially the illuminating Chapter VII: "Adam und Eva."

inaccessible region, remote from the world].” The other had a mind to laugh, but contained herself, so she might make Lisetta speak farther, and said, “Faith, Madam, an the angel Gabriel be your lover and tell you this, needs must it be so; but methought not the angels did these things.” “Gossip,” answered the lady, “you are mistaken; zounds, he doth what you wot of better than my husband and telleth me they do it also up yonder; but, for that I seem to him fairer than any she in heaven, he hath fallen in love with me and cometh full oft to lie with me; seestow now?” The gossip to whom it seemed a thousand years till she should be whereas she might repeat these things took her leave of Madam Lisetta and foregathering at an entertainment with a great company of ladies, orderly recounted to them the whole story. They told it again to their husbands and other ladies, and these to yet others, and so in less than two days Venice was all full of it.

Here, as always, one of the episodes of a tale shall have to be considered within the context of the whole situation. The case is truly unheard of. A woman goes to bed with her confessor, while believing (and boasting about this) that the Angel Gabriel is her lover. So that the tale may develop, the incredible situation which is impenetrable to common sense, repugnant to human feeling, in short, anti-psychological, must be made public. And Boccaccio resorts to a conventional device, one of those very *media* of rhetoric of which he was a master. Emphasizing the conceitedness of the protagonist, he causes her, at the first opportunity, to reveal everything to the usual woman friend. The dialogue, naturally, is not an end in itself, but plays the role of a link between the *antefactum*, the exaggerated tone of which is not allowed to slacken, and the subsequent action, which will not have to be retarded. In order to solve such a difficult problem, he eliminates from the dialogue many things which, otherwise, would have a wholly justified place within it. He causes the protagonist to forget the recommendation to keep the secret, which would be instinctive even with an insane woman. He softpedals to the utmost the surprise of the gossip, and suppresses in the latter even the curiosity to discover directly or indirectly who the Angel Gabriel may be. A premature discovery would spoil all the subsequent episodes: the nocturnal lying in wait of Lisetta's brothers-in-law in order to catch the Angel of whom they have had slight hint; the consequent jumping of the Angel into the Grand Canal, his swimming out to safety and, finally, his ignominious end. At the moment when the dialogue takes place, Lisetta must be stimulated to talk, but not beyond the exact limit which Boccaccio demands for the development, fit arrangement, and balance of his tale. He disregards any psychological elements which may disturb his artistic aims. He selects, apportions light or shadow, not according to a complex criterion of truth, but according to a pure standard of fantasy. Without breaking the style, without overstepping the key-limits, the narrative passes from episode to further episodes, with renewed freshness. Thus the dialogue between gossips, a link which connects two

adventurous parts of a very adventurous tale, is placed in perfect coherence with them. Everything is unreality, everything is adventure, or, if you prefer, reality is the handmaiden of adventure.

How did this kind of tale occur to Boccaccio? We shall not lose ourselves in a hunt for sources. He himself, in the introduction to the *Fourth Day*, rails ironically at such labors and declares them impossible in his case. "For those who say that these things have not been such as I have here set them down, I would fain produce the originals." But to bring in the "originals" was somewhat difficult: even when Boccaccio disguises persons who really did exist, he chooses them among the dead and leaves the living alone. For a transforming and deforming fantasy, the supposed "real model," even if it existed, is developed out of all proportion, and therefore signifies nothing. If, instead, hints apt to excite a fantasy already hyperexcited were to be found, we could legitimately use them. What a temptation for Boccaccio, if he had come across a woman who had blurted out: "I have, for a lover, an Angel of God, who watches over my body with great zeal." This woman is to be found in the *Legenda aurea*, and her words are: "Angelum Dei habeo amatorem, qui nimio zelo custodit corpus meum." Through respect for Saint Cecilia and for Christian symbolism, we shall refrain from any further source research.

Let us again resort to Jacopo da Varazze, merely in order to draw a piece of information from him relating to language and style. The reader may remember the meeting of the devils, at midnight, in Rome, in the desecrated temple of Apollo. A devil who had tempted and corrupted a hermit, relates his deed to Satan, sitting on a throne: "Quod Sathan audiens de solio suo surrexit et eum osculans de capite suo coronam abstulit et capiti illius imposuit, dicens. . ."

Undoubtedly, Boccaccio did not have in mind this ceremony, when he described the transmission of the crown to the new king or queen appointed to rule on every successive day of the *Decameron*. Yet he avails himself of a syntactic and stylistic rhythm equal to that of the Latin passage: "*conoscendo che il fine del suo ragionamento era venuto, levatasi in piè e trattasi la corona dello alloro, quella piacevolmente mise in capo ad Elisa, dicendole. . .*" (V); or: "*La quale Reina sentendo esser finita [the last tale of the day], e similmente la sua signoria, levata in piè, la corona si trasse e ridendo la mise in capo a Dioneo e disse. . .*" (VI). The use of participles in the Latin of Jacopo da Varazze and the use of participial gerunds and participles in the vernacular of Boccaccio, as, in general, the employment and collocation of verbs, give an idea of the kinship of the two modes of prose writing, and confirm linguistic analyses already made, in a more skillful way, by others.

Slight results are attained if, in order to understand Boccaccio from every angle (linguistic, stylistic, and artistic), the critic resorts to classical literature on the one hand, to vernacular literature on the other, paying no attention to intermediate texts like the *Legenda* (I do not say that this

is the only one). Medieval literature supplied him—as we have seen—with exemplaristic forms tested by long tradition, with imaginative motifs easy to utilize and, at the same time, to recast the subject matter already present in that tradition, and with extremely precise syntactic structures. We are all agreed that when Boccaccio imitates Ciceronian Latin, he spoils everything. No compliment is paid to him if we view him only as a pre-humanist. From among so many insignificant humanists who today enjoy undeserved historical vindication, let us choose the Latinizing vernacular of a serious man like L. B. Alberti. Humanism also prompts him to indulge in interminable and stagnating verbal amplifications; whereas Boccaccio tends to foreshorten and race on to a set goal. Boccaccio, like Jacopo da Varazze, is extremely skillful in using gradation and crescendo with his interweavings: a style which, we find, is peculiar to legend and *exemplum*.

3. The exemplaristic patterns persist throughout the *Decameron*. The content varies from time to time, and it is not always indecent. Boccaccesque love is characterized by much licentiousness, but it also has its loyalties, its pride, its generosity. Fairly often, amorous adventures recede into the background, and the emphasis is on the fickleness of fortune—an old theme, descanted upon *per exempla* from classical antiquity down to the *Novellino*. The last day of the *Decameron* deals only with serious topics: examples of honesty, gratitude, liberality, abstinence. And these virtues too are in such superabundant measure, that their resonance is as ample and adventurous as that of Roland's horn. Like every true artist, Boccaccio remains constantly loyal to his form. The *Decameron* closes with the difficult figure of Griselda, a magnificent example of firmness.

A nobleman decides to get married. Much to the surprise of his relatives and friends, his choice falls upon a girl belonging to the lowest and poorest social status. From her, he demands nothing. He only asks whether she is willing not to be surprised at anything he may do or say and to comply with his wishes. The girl consents. Then, in the presence of all, the lord commands her to strip naked. Having re-clothed her with splendid garments, he leads her to the wedding. "The young wife seemed to have, together with her clothes, changed her mind and manners." She put off her uncouthness, and, much to the amazement of everybody, for her happiness and that of her lord, learned how to behave like a gentlewoman of ancient lineage. After a while, she presented her husband with a daughter, over whom the father greatly rejoiced.

But on a certain day, the lord took it into his head to "seek, by dint of long tribulation and things unendurable, to make trial of her patience." He begins by telling her that people have not forgotten the low estate from which she came. The woman answers: "My lord, do with me that which thou deemest will be most for thine honor and solace, for that I shall be content with all." Shortly after, the lord sends an emissary to take her little girl away from her, with obscure words, as if hinting that

the child is to be killed. To her husband's messenger the woman recommends: "Take her and punctually do that which thy lord hath enjoined thee; but leave her not to be devoured of the beasts and birds, except he command it thee." The woman grows pregnant again and this time is delivered of a son. This second child is taken away from her in the same obscure manner. The wife repeats to her husband: "My lord, study to content thyself and to satisfy thy pleasure and have no thought of me, for that nothing is dear to me save in so much as I see it please thee."

Confronted with such docility, the lord allows thirteen years to elapse, and then, "deeming it time to make the supreme trial of her endurance, declared, in the presence of his people, that he could no longer endure to have her to wife." He deprives her of everything and orders her to go away. She obeys, saying: "My lord, I ever knew my mean estate to be nowise sortable with your nobility, and for that which I have been with you I have still confessed myself indebted to you and to God, nor have I ever made nor held it mine, as given to me, but have still accounted it but as a loan." And with a single shirt, which she has requested, in order to cover her body which will always belong to her husband, she leaves the house. Meanwhile her lord prepares for a new wedding. He needs a servant-maid who is conversant with housework, and therefore he calls back as a servant his repudiated wife. The ceremony is being prepared. Guests and relatives arrive, also a younger brother of the second wife. She appears beautiful and extremely young. The repudiated wife goes to meet her and greets her: "Welcome and fair welcome to my lady."

The lord manifests his will. Finally he reveals that the young lady and her younger brother are the children born to him by his wife, so loyal and sorely tried. Her "long patience" has the reward which it deserved. The lord restores her to the splendor to which he had formerly raised her, and reveals to her that everything has taken place according to a "preordained end."

It was necessary to elaborate at length on this tale—one of the most misinterpreted of the whole *Decameron*—in order to disclose its wealth of organization and its recondite meaning. Psychological criticism has made out of the lord a man full of "manifest oddities," a kind of tyrant worthy not of the *Promessi Sposi*, but of the worst among the third-rate Italian tragedies. According to that criticism, the woman is "a poor idiot," who tolerates "the most ferocious cruelties and insults." In conclusion, the tale "is without meaning."¹⁰

On the contrary: we are confronted with the most complex *exemplum* which Boccaccio ever handled. Its content is not only serious, but grave; and this is perhaps what has caused more than one critic to lose his bearings. A love, first given in superabundance to a loyal woman, is taken away from her with successive "wrenchings," in an increasing series of arduous trials,

10. Such is Momigliano's opinion in his edition: *Il Decamerone*, 49 novelle commentate, 2nd ed. (Milano, 1936).

and is finally restored to her with equal superabundance. This is the scheme, as old as the *Vitae Sanctorum*, of the *exempla* of humility and of sufferance. From this angle, the foolish pliancy of the woman, the odd "cruelty" of her lord, the meaning of our tale, its very essence, become clear. In fact, the tale is the result of so many parables as no writer, before or after Boccaccio, has ever dared to cope with. The counterpart must be sought in the legends depicted by painters.

In Boccaccio's fresco every section—every parable—closes with a recurrent motif: *fiat voluntas tua*. The lord asks faithfulness and obedience from a humble girl, and she promises. The lord bares her flesh in the presence of all, and she consents. The lord gets angry, starts to menace her, and she says, "Do with me what thou wilt": *fiat voluntas tua*. The lord's messenger comes to deprive her of her little daughter, and she says, "Do punctually that which thy lord hath enjoined thee," that is, she exhorts him to repeat with her: *fiat voluntas tua*. The lord is about to wrest her little son from her, and she says: "Nothing is dear to me save in so much as I see it please thee." She complies with the mystic rule: "E'n la sua volontade è nostra pace." The lord strips her of all other possessions, and she, in the act of returning her nuptial ring to him, says: "Whatever I had I have still accounted it but as a loan," that is, she renounces every right and annuls her own will. The lord lowers her to the status of a maid, introduces the new bride to her, and she thus reveals herself as the perfect handmaiden subserving the lord's will. The lord has brought his purpose to the "preordained end." From the dark night in which he had withdrawn, he pours on the humble and loyal soul the superabundant reward of his grace.

In order properly to focus this tale, it was necessary to examine it in the light of its own poetic, and to analyze into its single component parables the complex and gradually developed metaphor of which it is made up. The whole composition has a rhythm marked by that recurrent emphasis—*fiat voluntas tua*—which is intensified at set intervals, seconding the increasing mystery of each parable. Only if we take it for what it is—a *mystery*—does the tale disclose its content and its stylistic and artistic merits. The liturgic mode in which it develops is reminiscent of the *sacre rappresentazioni*, the sacred texts, and, above all, of the Book of Job.

The inscrutable judgment of God wishes that Job, deprived of all, even of his sons, should remain naked as he was when he issued forth from his mother's womb. But faith does not abandon that suffering man: "And he said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly" (i. 21-22). The analogy is evident. It remains to be seen which extension Boccaccio may have attributed to it, which symbol he may have assigned to his last legend.

STENDHAL: CREATION AND SELF-KNOWLEDGE

By Victor Brombert

SOME twenty-five years ago, Ramon Fernandez delivered a lecture on the relation of autobiography to the novel. The case of Stendhal was under consideration. This lecture, later published in the collected essays *Messages*,¹ is part of the general offensive that was launched during the first decades of this century against the frequently loose identification of life with literary art. As such, it stands as an important contribution to modern criticism. But Fernandez also offers fresh views on Stendhal's personality as a writer. Alone as a piece of Stendhalian criticism, the essay well deserves translation into English. Fernandez renders Stendhal a real service. He challenges all extremes: the critics who read his works as polemical or didactic literature, as well as those who complain of his inveterate egotism. To the latter, he points out that Stendhal, as a novelist, uses, but does not exhibit his inner life, that he borrows private materials disinterestedly; to the former, that his work defies the laws of rudimentary conceptualism. It is a sincere attempt to restore esthetic dignity to a writer who has suffered a great deal at the hands of anecdote-loving biographers and critics blinded by the alluring theories of Beylism.

It is nevertheless remarkable that Fernandez should have devoted to Stendhal a study primarily aimed at proving that no analogical relation exists between autobiography and a work of art. His task would no doubt have been simpler, and his arguments more convincing, had he chosen a writer such as Flaubert, craftsman and artificer, who to an entire generation of writers and critics has become a living symbol of the impersonal artist-God. That Fernandez should have chosen Stendhal instead, indicates that he was more concerned with a general theory than with the evaluation of an individual writer. The result is twofold. Fernandez comes very close to establishing a sound relation between what is autobiography and what is literary creation. But as far as Stendhal is concerned, this attempt at making him conform to an esthetic conception only leads to a new heresy: an oversimplification of Stendhal's emotive participation in the creative act.

The major part of Fernandez' essay is a closely knit discussion of the problem on an abstract level. While admitting that objectivity in art is probably a myth, Fernandez is convinced that the autobiographic *I* does not necessarily have a form, in the metaphysical sense of the word, prior to the literary form. The conscience of the *self* and the work of art, he points out, are two distinct realities, that may borrow from each other, but nevertheless lead to independent syntheses. To the question as to whether

1. "L'Autobiographie et le Roman," *Messages* (Paris, 1926).

artistic creation can serve as an instrument of knowledge of oneself by oneself, Fernandez replies negatively. Taking up Eliot's metaphor (the mind of the artist is a catalyst) to stress the fact that feelings and emotions having undergone esthetic transformation become useless to the one who transcribes them, Fernandez concludes that in any case the experience of the artist is merely tangent to his experience as a man, and does not pass through its center. The artist renounces the man.

The use of personal experiences as source material for art is indeed very different from the use of art as a tool for self-knowledge and the solution of disturbing personal problems. Stendhal's fictional world—Fernandez would agree—is woven around a network of memories. "Tu n'es qu'un *naturaliste*," Stendhal notes in self-accusation on the margin of his manuscript of *Lucien Leuwen*, "tu ne choisis pas les modèles, mais prends pour *love* toujours Mélite et Dominique."² "Mélite" we know is the proud, inaccessible Mathilde Dembowski, whom Stendhal had loved and courted with pitiful lack of success during his sojourn in Milan. The remorse over his chronic clumsiness and the memory of this woman whom he had never possessed haunted him for many years. He later found some consolation in the thought that clumsiness in love was a cardinal virtue, and that perhaps Mathilde had also been a timid soul. As to "Dominique," it is Beyle-Stendhal himself, the pet among the many pseudonyms he had devised in his schizophrenic need to lose and find himself.

But is not this need to lose and find oneself precisely an example of the type of personal problems Stendhal shares with his personages? Are not most of his heroes obsessed by the need to unveil the mystery of their own conscience (if necessary, by changing their lives and even their identities) coupled with a mixed fear and compulsion to be judged? In *Souvenirs d'égotisme*, Stendhal admits that he would wear a mask with pleasure and change his name with joy. The hero of *Armance*, Octave, painfully aware of his sexual impotence, confesses to his cousin: "J'ai soif de l'*incognito*." He toys with the following projects: to call himself Monsieur Lenoir and to make a livelihood by giving geometry lessons to provincials; or to assume the name of Pierre Gerlat and work as a butler in Lyons or Geneva.³ As to Lucien Leuwen, he nervously echoes the very riddles the author proposes to himself in *Souvenirs d'égotisme* and *La Vie de Henry Brulard*: who am I? who have I been? To Madame de Chasteller who calls him "un homme étrange," Lucien modestly replies: "Il serait plus poli de vous dire oui. Mais, en vérité, je ne sais pas ce que je suis, et je donnerais beaucoup à qui pourrait me le dire."⁴

This perplexity is intimately connected with a histrionic sensibility that

2. *Marginalia*, ed. Le Divan, II, 217.

3. *Armance*, ed. Garnier (Paris, 1950), pp. 120-121.

4. *Lucien Leuwen*, ed. Le Divan, II, 76.

records and needs to record, the reactions of another conscience. "L'œil ne se voit pas lui-même." (The eye cannot see itself.) This sad observation explains why Stendhal, at the very beginning of *La Vie de Henry Brulard*, expresses the desire to consult a friend. But there is no external oracle to supply the answers. For to whom has he ever confessed? "A quel ami ai-je jamais dit un mot de mes chagrins d'amour?" But as a novelist, Stendhal can revert the roles. He can become both the eye and the object seen. His bewildered heroes look questioningly to him, and he pronounces the judgment. Julien Sorel's exclamation: "Que j'aimerais celui qui me prouve que je ne suis qu'un sot!" does not go unanswered. Stendhal calls him a fool. But he also calls him a superior being, for Stendhal's heroes are always more aware of their defects than of their qualities.

Similarly Lucien Leuwen, the hero who perhaps most "resembles" the author, also struggles in this no man's land: between the need to be judged and the fear of being penetrated by another conscience. He thus arrives at the sophisticated reasoning that a ridicule has to be seen or it does not exist. Yet, in the very words of the author, he is like a nail exposed to every blow. The opinions of his ambitious cousin Develroy, the criticisms by his mocking father and inexorable friend Coffe echo in his mind. His Mephistopheles, the inner conscience, cruelly triumphs when it can repeat with drumbeat insistence these words: your cousin is right, your father is right, Coffe is right. Nevertheless, the same Lucien who admits his morbid sensitivity to his father's destructive epigrams, calls on Coffe, his companion and witness during the electoral campaign, the "eye" that saw his zeal and humiliations, to give a cold, dispassionate account of his behavior. When there is need of protecting his emotions in front of a hostile world, the mind of Lucien becomes "the jester of his soul." But always his first impulse is to confess a humiliating experience. Suffering from the very timidity that tortured Stendhal during a lifetime, Lucien is just as unable to give his own conscience what Ramon Fernandez calls a metaphysical form.

There is another aspect of Stendhal's fiction that seems to make a paradox of Fernandez' choice of this writer in support of an impersonal theory of the novel: his constant reliance on an affective frame of reference. This affectivity expresses itself on two levels: a heavy dependence on a disconnected memory, and more specifically on states of being associated with concrete details (psychological moments frequently translated into visual terms); and secondly, a constant emotional response to his own process of creation. He sometimes even kept a record of his emotional state at the time he composed a given passage. It is therefore most important to distinguish between what in Stendhal's novels is drawn from autobiography and how much is justification, dream transformation of reality—in other words, an unconscious apology, an imaginary victory over the past.

It is Fernandez' contention that Stendhal's urge to write, his *démon*

créateur, was the only effective means at the author's disposal for affirming his conscience and his being. His autobiographical attempts were an unsuccessful therapy insofar as his fragmentary memory only provided for a range of affective nuances, thus isolating the author from himself by excessive subjectivity. In his novels, however, Stendhal was able to postulate a unity of character and solve the mystery of action. This imaginative conversion, or "*coup d'état imaginatif*," as Fernandez calls it, centered the author's mind on his hero and in the very heart of the action. Under these conditions, the autobiographic *I* merely performed the function of a storehouse of memories and velleities.

The peril of schematization is particularly great in dealing with a protean writer such as Stendhal. Fernandez conceives of the relation of autobiography to a literary work in terms of the author's mind placed somewhere between his life (past and present) and the book he is writing. In the case of Stendhal, however, this image is somewhat distorted by the fact that he not only *uses* the past, but attempts to *transform* it. To transform it, that is, not in the usual literary sense of poetic metamorphosis of reality, but as a vindication of himself over his destiny, and even as a vindication of himself over himself. True, he relives with Lucien the timidity and lack of strategy of his own amorous siege of Mathilde Dembowska. He also never fails to blame and even insult his hero. As if compelled by a masochistic need to punish himself for his past defeats, he lavishes sarcasm upon sarcasm on Lucien, while at the same time setting him as a human being apart from the others in his capacity to feel and suffer. But in spite of this ambiguous attitude toward his protagonist, Stendhal's identification with him cannot be questioned. He overtakes him, rushes back, pushes and pulls him forward, shows him the way, tells him what he should and should not do—and even lends him his vocabulary. This identification goes to the extent of placing into Lucien's mouth sentences and snatches of sentences that come directly from pathetic letters written to Mathilde Dembowska during the summer of 1819—some fifteen years before writing the novel! "Vous ne m'avez pas accoutumé à l'indulgence," Stendhal complained to "Métilde." Lucien complains to Madame de Chasteller: "Vous ne m'avez pas gâté par vos bontés, . . . vous n'avez pas d'indulgence pour moi." In the margin of *Lucien Leuwen*, Stendhal comments: "*For me.*—1834, 1819, quinze ans after."⁵

It is a hackneyed truth that Stendhal makes unlimited use of details drawn from his own life. The romantic "Chasseur Vert" was a country "Kaffehaus" he had frequented while on administrative duty in Germany (though with less platonic feelings than Lucien!); Lafayette, whom Lucien is said to have met, Stendhal himself had known in the salon of Tracy; the trees Lucien contemplates with tenderness from his dreary office in the Ministry of the Interior are the very same trees that had consoled

5. *Correspondance*, ed. Le Divan, V, 236; *Lucien Leuwen*, II, 37 and II, 169.

young Henri Beyle during the tedious hours of work for his slave-driving cousin Daru; and Lucien in Nancy, is accused of being a spy for the government, just as Stendhal, in 1821, had been accused of being a spy in Milan. Yet the novel is far from being a recapture of the past. Lucien is endowed with wealth, beauty and a generous father. He is and has precisely what Beyle-Stendhal was not and did not have. More noteworthy even is the manner in which Madame de Chasteller permits the author an imaginative compensation for his disappointing relationship with Mathilde Dembowski. Stendhal's imagination is constantly at work, changing, modelling, justifying the past. Taking advantage of his omniscient position, he knows what he himself, and Lucien in the novel could not know. He is the eye that sees, and what he sees is entirely to his own, and to his hero's advantage: Madame de Chasteller falls in love immediately and is unable to hide her emotions. Only Lucien's lack of experience and concern with his own clumsiness prevent him from making the best of this initial success. Even Mathilde's stern indifference is justified in Madame de Chasteller. It is her modesty that forces her to hide her growing attachment, precisely because her love goes hand in hand with the fear of being despised by Lucien. Stendhal always protects the "pudeur" of his heroines. If she quarrels with him, it is because her mind is tortured by love. If she permits him only two visits a month (this was Mathilde's cruel law for Stendhal) it is because she lives in constant dread of compromising herself. But when she sees the expression of grief on Lucien's face, and hears the way he says "eh! bien. . .," she pities him and is about to surrender. The miracle has happened: Stendhal is so *taken* by his own imaginative transformation of reality, the word "pity" comes to him with such a revelatory impact, that he unconsciously repeats that very word four times within two pages.⁶

We are here touching on what constitutes perhaps the greatest objection to Fernandez' conception of the relation of the autobiographic *I* to the literary work. The conception is valid only so long as this relationship is strictly limited to the borrowing of materials from the storehouse of memories. In the case of Stendhal, however, we witness a constant emotional response to the very process of creation. Some critic—Pierre Gilbert, I believe—has shrewdly said that the event touches Stendhal only after he has lent it his own intonation. The presence of the author, therefore, cannot be considered merely in terms of a more or less successful compromise between memory and imagination. This presence is felt directly as a *dédoublement*, as an alternating action of the reflective and the unreflective conscience when faced with the written word.

This may explain in fact why the sentences of Stendhal, as Charles Du Bos points out, are so frequently a succession of seemingly unconnected modulations. This happens because the author is moved, reminded, stimu-

6. *Lucien Leuwen*, II, 171-173.

lated by his own manipulations of the literary material. The author suddenly intrudes, and these interventions are charming and irritating all at once, precisely because of their unpredictability. A careful scrutiny of the texts might reveal the secrets of these interventions. If no precise rhythm can be established, at least we may hope to understand better *what* causes the author to react. In *Lucien Leuwen*, for instance, it is quite obvious that the many mocking comments directed against the hero are nearly always occasioned by either of two situations: (1) when Lucien becomes "clever" (in order to establish his naïveté—and thus explain why he did not succeed); (2) when he does not succeed (in order to clear Madame de Chasteller of the imputation of insensitivity).

An unconscious strategy lies at the root of many of these interventions. When Lucien, after recovering from the initial shock of meeting Madame de Chasteller unexpectedly at the ball of the marquise de Marilly, finally overcomes his paralyzing timidity and succeeds in impressing her with his brilliant conversation, Stendhal immediately intervenes to assure the reader that it is by pure chance that his hero has assumed the tone of a skillful lover. "Certainement il n'était pas expert dans l'art de disposer d'un cœur de femme et de faire naître des sensations."⁷ What makes this intervention doubly interesting to us is the fact that after re-reading this passage, Stendhal jotted down in the manuscript: "Modèle: Dominique *himself*, Ah! Dominique *himself*!" The obvious tone of surprise in this excited comment is characteristic of Stendhal's *a posteriori* acknowledgment of autobiographic elements in his novel, and confirms our previous distinction between autobiographic intrusions and spontaneous responses to his own work at the moment of composition. Stendhal, in this specific case, did not really think of himself, but was at first only aware of the need to protect Lucien's naïveté.

Conversely, when Lucien does not succeed in overcoming his timidity, the author cruelly emphasizes his clumsiness and lack of experience in order to protect indirectly Madame de Chasteller's disposition to love. Particularly revealing in this connection is the nocturnal scene in which Stendhal acts as prompter to Lucien, suggesting to him a formula with which to broach a conversation with Madame de Chasteller, who is hiding behind her window.⁸ Lucien is branded as a fool because he has not the required talent. But what matters in this instance is not so much the inadequacy of Lucien as the hidden reality of Madame de Chasteller's emotions.

It would be wrong, of course, to consider such interventions as mere tactical devices. Stendhal contradicts himself too often, even in his novels, to be accused of any such planning. A meandering, yet rapid improvisational thought process is what gives even to his most clearly defined statements an

7. *Lucien Leuwen*, I, 308.

8. *Ibid.*, II, 7-8.

emotional quality. What may appear on the surface as a placid or even slightly ironic observation is frequently charged with self-conscious emotion. When Stendhal writes: "C'était une de ces soirées enchanteresses, que l'on peut compter au nombre des plus grands ennemis de l'impassibilité du cœur,"⁹ one may be sure that all of his nerves are involved. It is probably in passages such as this—the episode of the "Chasseur Vert"—that the sensitive reader is most aware of Stendhal's reactions to his own fictional world. The bohemian orchestra of the "Kaffehaus" has performed a soft, simple and slow music; the sun has set behind the tall trees of the forest; the lovers were about to fall into each other's arms. Stendhal moved by his own tale, concludes: "C'est pour ces rares moments qu'il vaut la peine de vivre."¹⁰

Henry James's statement that "the teller of the story is primarily, none the less, the listener to it, the reader of it too. . . ." has a direct bearing on our own observations.¹¹ Paul Bourget also commented on the fact that the narrator is a reacting witness.¹² Even theorists with no practical experience in the writing of novels have observed this phenomenon of immediate and spontaneous reaction to the literary work at the time of creation. R. Koskimies, in his *Theorie des Romans*, points out that the writing of fiction is a dynamic activity in which the character of the "Erzählaktes" (process of narration) reflects itself.¹³ The interventions are provoked by the varying degrees of enthusiasm with which the author responds to self-created stimuli.

In some cases, to be sure, the transposition of past experiences into the medium of art also necessitates a degree of intervention and didacticism, for the reason that the author, remembering his past emotions, does not feel sure that the situation conceived and presented in his work is powerful enough, or sufficiently nuanced to convey all the moral and emotive connotations. The memory, on which he relies too heavily, enters into conflict with the imagination. The author, then, noticing the lack of an "objective correlative," feels compelled to specify, detail and sum up states of being. But these comments are not always helpful. In certain instances, the reader of Stendhal finds it difficult to sympathize with the intensity of feeling of certain personages. The reactions of Octave (in *Armance*), of Léon de Montenotte (in *Le Rose et le Vert*), and sometimes even those of Lucien seem out of proportion with their causes, and this not only because the author fails to reveal a secret (the sexual impotence of Octave), but because he has transferred upon an external agent a highly charged private emotion, the sources of which lie buried beneath personal memories.

9. *Lucien Leuwen*, II, 36.

10. *Ibid.*, II, 40.

11. Henry James, *The Art of the Novel* (London, 1947), p. 63.

12. Paul Bourget, *Pages de critique et de doctrine*, (Paris, 1912) p. 26.

13. *Annales Scientiarum Fenicae*, ser. B, XXXV (Helsinki, 1936).

Stendhal himself was as conscious of the distinction between memory and imagination as he was aware of their interrelation. The manuscripts of *Lucien Leuwen*, precious because they reveal so much about Stendhal's method of composition, contain many definite allusions. In the margin of the passage that describes how Lucien is driven to seek consolation in drinking and pretense of gaiety, Stendhal comments in his amusing mixture of French and English: "Le 12 mai 1819, *I write upon the sensations of 1819, fraîches comme d'hier après quinze ans. The imagination alone is impossible.*"¹⁴ Stendhal knows that he is at his best when he achieves a happy synthesis between the two. Rare, privileged moments, when the joy of creation is fused with the joy of remembering and feeling. But this synthesis, this blending of experience with experiment, is possible only when Stendhal can make discoveries in his own heart. The eye, looking at the reflected image in the mirror, can finally see itself. The astonishing fact is that Stendhal was also aware of this relation between enthusiasm and lucidity. The joy of creation, in his case, depends as much on a rehearsal of known emotions as on the discovery of a pattern hitherto unknown. In a marginal note to *Une Position sociale*, Stendhal writes: "*For me: Première fois, depuis la rue de Richelieu que j'écris quatorze pages, et avec entraînement, id est les yeux bien ouverts. 2 octobre 1832.*"¹⁵ This isolated, somewhat mysterious comment becomes meaningful if we remember how often, in *Henry Brulard*, Stendhal warns his reader that he is making discoveries while writing. But this claim to see the truth only when he faces the half-written page is not merely—as Valéry would suggest—the pose of the egoist playing at sincerity. Nor is it, as Fernandez would have it, an admission of defeat on the part of the autobiographer unable to synthesize experience. It is a key to Stendhal's very attitude to the process of writing—whether autobiography or fiction. His vision is always partial, disconnected, contradictory. Whether he tries to understand himself or to cast light on the conscience of his heroes, the process is the same. The eye shines with the joy of exploration, while the mind reacts spontaneously to the discoveries made with the very same sense of excitement and surprise as if these discoveries in fiction were part of a personal experience. Spontaneity is a quality that has long ago been praised in Stendhal. What has not always been understood, is that this spontaneity is the expression of a self-conscious imagination forever on the alert, forever taking all things "personally," forever sensitive—even to itself.

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14. See ed. Champion, edited by Henry Debraye (Paris, 1927), II, 441.

15. *Mélanges de littérature*, ed. Le Divan, I, 126.

ESPRONCEDA Y EL PARAÍSO

By Francisco García Lorca

SE SUELE considerar a Espronceda como poeta de ademán un poco des-templado y gesticulante. Es decir: se duda de su sinceridad. La duda puede expresarse en esta pregunta: ¿hay correspondencia entre el gesto y la actitud íntima? Si la hay, Espronceda sería sincero y seguiría teniendo un gesto extremado. Éste es el caso a mi juicio.

La única manera de resolver la duda que planteo es adentrarse en el mundo del poeta, descubrir cuál sea éste y ver cómo se expresa. Decir que Espronceda tiene *voz propia* no es decir gran cosa, pero ya es añadir algo el afirmar que la voz es propia del poeta porque refleja un mundo propio. Y decir que en el verso más insignificante se reconoce a Espronceda equivale a afirmar la intensidad y coherencia de su mundo poético.

De todos los temas religiosos que podían tentar la imaginación de un poeta romántico, Espronceda sólo retiene el mito de la creación. De la relación entre Dios y el hombre, sólo aquel momento en que Dios condena a la criatura humana a perpetuo duelo y desventura. Dios es siempre el Dios de las alturas, Dios del castigo y, a veces, de la venganza. El Dios humanizado y hecho carne terrenal, ese lazo divino entre el cielo y la tierra, no lo ve Espronceda. La relación se plantea entre el criador y la criatura; entre el cielo, morada de poderes celestes, y la tierra, exclusiva morada del hombre, que es así un ser irredento.

Dice en el *Diablo Mundo*:

¿Es Dios tal vez el Dios de la venganza
y hierve el rayo en su irritada mano
y la angustia, el dolor la muerte lanza
al inocente que lo implora en vano?
¿Es Dios el Dios que arranca la esperanza?

.....
Extasiado en su inmenso poderío
¿Es Dios el Dios que goza en su hermosura,
que arrojó el universo en el vacío,
leyes le dió y abandonó su hechura?

Éste es el Dios que prevalece en la obra de Espronceda, el de la condenación del hombre, el que le arranca la esperanza, o lo abandona a su desgracia irremediable.

Y cuando no, los poderes celestes son indiferentes al dolor del hombre, lo que, frente a la consideración del propio destino, engendra en Espronceda una viva sensación de soledad.

Solo está el corazón, blasfeme o llore,
maldiga a Dios o su piedad implore.

O como dice en el *Canto a Teresa*:

Si a Dios llamaste y no te escuchó Dios.

Podría decirse que la humanidad está dejada de la mano de Dios. Como cuando exclama en el espléndido soneto dedicatorio de sus poesías:

Los ojos vuelvo en incesante anhelo
y gira en torno indiferente el mundo
y en torno gira indiferente el cielo.

Podrían aducirse otros ejemplos de esta desolada soledad del hombre ante la indiferencia de Dios. De ahí el desamparo del "desierto corazón herido" del poeta, tocado del rayo vengador.

Pero es su peculiar concepción del amor lo que ordena y da coherencia en Espronceda a todos sus temas, incluso a la relación del hombre con la divinidad. La vida y la muerte serán el ímpetu hacia la realización de amor y su último remanso. Pero el amor es un imposible absoluto para Espronceda. La pureza, la ilusión, son la fuente y el soporte del amor, pero éste tiende a realizarse, a satisfacerse. El amor que nace de ilusiones no puede alimentarse de ellas; la realización del amor engendra la impureza y con ella su muerte. Hay en Espronceda una terrible idea angustiosa de que el amor degrada. Lo que más alto hace subir el espíritu del hombre, lo único que puede encender en él la chispa divina, lleva en sí, inevitable, el germen de la corrupción. De la infeliz Elvira a la caída Jarifa hay un proceso fatal.

La ilusión es la máscara del deseo y el amor consiste en la destrucción del objeto amado. El amor es, pues, metafísicamente imposible, y la razón última es que Dios o el Diablo envenenaron las fuentes en su origen. Volverse a la causa primaria del mal es lo que trae con frecuencia obsesionante a la poesía de Espronceda el mito del Paraíso.

Mujeres vi de virginal limpieza
entre albas nubes de celeste lumbre;
Yo las toqué y en humo su pureza
trocarse vi, y en lodo y podredumbre.

Apenas hay que llamar la atención sobre la típica adjetivación de la estrofa, pero subrayemos ese *yo las toqué* que tan claramente acusa, como en otras ocasiones, el formidable poder destructivo del contacto. El proceso de la pureza a la degradación está precisamente formulado en el *Canto a Teresa*, imagen que alienta en todas las representaciones femeninas del poeta, las virginales y las prostitutas.

¡Oh! ¿Quién impío
¡Ay! agostó la flor de tu pureza?
Tú fuiste un tiempo cristalino río,
manantial de purísima limpieza;

después torrente de color sombrío
rompiendo entre peñascos y maleza.
Y estanque al fin de aguas corrompidas
entre fétido fango detenidas.

La condenación del hombre repite, no hay que decirlo, la de Luzbel, condenado a eterno desamor y tiniebla. El descubrimiento artístico del Diablo, tan caro al romanticismo, se marca en Espronceda e individualiza poéticamente, no ya por la intensidad con que el poeta se representa y siente una solidaridad de destino con el Ángel de Luz (y en esto sólo se podría reconocer a Espronceda), sino por cómo hace carne en él la visión del amor como pecado; ese pecado original que al inficionar los más nobles deseos e ilusiones del hombre hace de la vida misma un amargo delito.

Incluso en los poemas que menos reflejan la intimidad del poeta, como en el himno al Sol, ya le dice: "libre tú de la cólera divina," aunque más adelante, haciendo al astro participe también de un cósmico castigo primigenio, exclama:

¿Quién sabe si tal vez pobre destello
eres tú de otro sol que otro universo
mayor que el nuestro un día
con doble resplandor esclarecía?

Pero acaso en ningún poema está tan presente el sentimiento del Paraíso como en el dedicado *A una estrella*, símbolo virginal en la compleja y rica simbología esproncediana de la luz. En la poética biografía de esta estrella se reproduce el destino de Lucifer.

Pero tú conmigo lloras,
que eres el ángel caído
del dolor.

Y se reproduce el destino del hombre que es, naturalmente, el del poeta:

Es acaso tu luz recuerdo triste
de otro antiguo perdido resplandor. . .

Y más adelante:

Y al primer triunfo del amor primero
que embalsamó en amores el Edén,
luciste acaso mágico lucero.

Pero la estrella no puede escapar al sino de todo lo creado.

Ah, lucero. Tú perdiste
también tu puro fulgor
y lloraste;
también como yo sufriste,
y el crudo arpón del dolor
¡Ay! probaste.

El poema a Jarifa sólo se entiende bien pensándolo como una continuación, en otro plano, del poema a la Estrella, como uno de los diversos intentos del poeta por romper, aun consciente de su imposibilidad, el estrecho cerco en que colocó al hombre el drama del Paraíso.

No siempre está claro en la condenación edénica a quién cabe una participación mayor, si a Dios o al Diablo. En el *Estudiante de Salamanca* cuando éste lleva adelante su simbólica aventura, dice:

Si quier de parte de Dios
Si quier de parte del Diablo,
¿quién nos trajo aquí a los dos?

Y explica más adelante:

Me descubre mi razón
que un poder aquí supremo,
invisible, se ha mezclado.

El Don Juan de Espronceda, "almendra españolísima de todos los don-juanes," como dijo Don Antonio Machado, se irrita de que se haya inmiscuído un poder sobrenatural en asunto tan de su propia jurisdicción humana. Pero el propio Espronceda fija en las fuentes demoníacas la condenación del amor. Dice en el *Canto a Teresa*:

Brota en el cielo del amor la fuente
que a fecundar el universo mana,
y en la tierra su límpida corriente
sus márgenes con flores engalana.
Mas ¡Ay! huid: el corazón ardiente,
que el agua clara por beber se afana,
lágrimas verterá de duelo eterno,
pues su raudal lo envenenó el infierno.

Y ha dicho antes:

Sí, que el demonio en el Edén perdido
abrasara con fuego del profundo
la primera mujer, y ¡Ay! aquel fuego
la herencia ha sido de sus hijos luego.

Pero este recuerdo de un amor paradisiaco está presente en la mente humana amargando deseos e ilusiones con la conciencia de la imposibilidad de alcanzarlo. Pero, aún así, también está en Espronceda la quimera del Paraíso recobrado.

En el poema a la Estrella dice, aludiendo a la luz, que

Inspiraba en el alma un ansia eterna
de amor perpetuo y de placer sin fin. . .

Y en Jarifa, su continuación, añade:

Yo quiero amor, quiero gloria
 quiero un deleite divino,
 como en mi mente imagino,
 como en el mundo no hay.
 Y es la luz de aquel lucero
 que engañó mi fantasía,
 fuego fatuo, falso guía
 que errante y ciego me tray.

En el *Estudiante*, hablando de la visión del blanco velo, dice el poeta:

Imagen fiel de la ilusión dichosa
 que acaso el hombre encontrará en el cielo,
 pensamiento sin fórmula y sin nombre
 que hace rezar y blasfemar al hombre.

La explicación de ese ímpetu radicalmente contradictorio, y por lo tanto dramático, la encontramos en el *Canto a Teresa* con su habitual intensidad poética:

Es el amor que recordando llora
 las arboledas del Edén divinas,
 amor allí arrancado, allí nacido,
 que busca en vano aquí su bien perdido.

Y este adjetivo, *perdido*, recurrente por excelencia, "resplandor perdido," "placer perdido," "aroma perdido," "niñez perdida," tiene siempre en Espronceda una resonancia edénica.

Los términos irreductiblemente inconciliables con que el amor se presenta, pueden ser comprendidos en todo su dramatismo por aquellos, según Espronceda, que en alas de la ilusión han mordido el fruto prohibido, los que están bajo la sombra amarga del árbol de la ciencia.

Pero si el amor es imposible, el hombre no puede menos de buscarlo: la más alta virtud de la mujer es la ilusión de amor, del hombre, el impulso hacia su realización, aun conscientes ambos de su imposibilidad. La fuerza que arrastra a realizar una quimera de la que es imposible apartarse engendra un sentimiento desesperado en el que la razón desmiente constantemente al deseo. Dentro de este esquema, la mujer es una víctima fatal del hombre, ya que fuera de él la mujer, como mujer, no tiene existencia posible. Y el poeta se vuelve contra ella al ver eternamente proyectada la sombra de la mujer primera, o la irritación la resuelve en un sentimiento de piedad que abarca lo mismo a la doncella alimentada por la pura ilusión de amor, que a la mujer ya caída que va consumando su propio drama espoleada por el deseo. La oscilación de sentimientos que el *Canto a Teresa* trasluce es típico. Pero el dolor y el desengaño vuelven a juntar al hombre y la mujer.

!Tú también como yo tienes
 desgarrado el corazón!

Pero siendo la razón un obstáculo al amor, el poeta salta por encima de ella y señala el *frenesí*, como uno de los posibles climas del amor. Todos sus poemas amorios transcurren en medio de esta locura de amor. Locura dionisiaca, embriaguez, unas veces, *desvarío*, otras, en el ser amado, que anula las potencias racionales, y entonces pasa ante Espronceda la sombra de Ofelia.

En este delirio muchas veces vuelve el poeta los ojos al cielo, imputando la última culpa al que así dispuso las cosas desde su origen. Posición blasfematoria que al anular la idea de responsabilidad ante Dios y ante el propio objeto amado, lo encaminan hacia Don Juan, otra posición posible ante el amor. Pero, claro, para Espronceda, Don Juan es un

Segundo Lucifer que se levanta
del rayo vengador la frente herida.

Y todavía, cuando en el *Diablo Mundo* habla el espíritu del mal, dice al hombre:

...ese gusano que roe
tu corazón, esa sombra
que anubla tus ilusiones
soy yo, el lucero caído,
el ángel de los dolores.

Se ha preocupado la crítica de las fuentes de este poema; se ha dicho si procede de la visión del hombre natural, de Gracián, del *Fausto* de Goethe, del *Ingenio* de Voltaire, pero parece que se ha olvidado poner bastante los ojos en el hecho palmario de que el protagonista se llama Adán y de que los temas edénicos están constantemente engarzados en el poema. Que el tema del primer hombre estaba presente en la mente del poeta cuando escribe el *Diablo Mundo*, y que incluso hay una identificación entre actitudes propias y Adán, se muestra en el siguiente trozo:

Tal nuestro padre Adán. . . Pero dejando
comparaciones frías
que el alma atormentando
nos traen recuerdos de mejores días,
y de aquella fatal, negra mañana
de la flaqueza o robustez de Eva
cuando alargó la mano a la manzana
y . . . pero pluma, queda. . .
¿A qué vuelvo otra vez al Paraíso
cuando la suerte quiso
que no fuera yo Adán, sino Espronceda?

Aparece expresado en el título el tema de la inmortalidad; y el poeta revierte al protagonista al estado de inocencia y ausencia de muerte de que gozaba Adán antes de gustar del fruto prohibido. Precisamente el senti-

miento del tiempo, visto desde la infracción primera, es quizá el tema mejor poetizado en toda la obra de Espronceda.

El amor es también imposible porque hay una secreta aspiración, recuerdo paradisiaco, al amor perpetuo y sólo puede vivir en el instante, en ese momento fugacísimo que es su culminación y su muerte. En el recuerdo ilusorio de un tiempo continuo y sin orillas, la agonía de amor del poeta está despedazada por el momento innumerable. Y desfilan por sus páginas un cortejo de horas magníficamente poetizadas, incansablemente presurosas: "Y temblaban las horas que venían." O aparece un tiempo pasado, perdido, inmóvil: "Yace allí el tiempo en sueño sepultado."

Ese momento fugacísimo, limítrofe de la culminación y la extinción del amor, en el que se oculta una siniestra sensación destructiva, repite y renueva en la vida del hombre el castigo y condenación originales. Esto está curiosamente expresado con el grito, el gemido, con el típico ¡Ay! de Espronceda, que es mucho menos retórico de lo que se cree. Con notable reiteración el ¡Ay! está colocado en la dramática divisoria; ese ¡Ay! así descrito en varias ocasiones como

crujido del vaso que estalla al dolor,
que apenas medroso lastima el oído,
pero que punzante rasga el corazón. . .

Es un ¡Ay! apenas perceptible, "sólo del triste corazón sentido," o como dice en un estupendo verso hecho a base de trisílabos,

gemido de amargo recuerdo pasado.

En esta dimensión temporal del drama aparece la muerte de Espronceda como un remanso; no es la descarnada muerte romántica (aunque ésta esté con otras implicaciones), ni la apocalíptica muerte miltónica, sino la isla de reposo, el único eficaz asilo al peregrinar del hombre. No hay por qué sonreír cuando el poeta dice: "Sólo en la paz de los sepulcros creo." O cuando exclama ante el cuerpo de Teresa:

¿Quién pudiera . . .
disipar tu dolor y recogerte
en su seno de paz? ¡Sólo la muerte!

Esa misteriosa virgen de los últimos amores que dice al poeta en su soledad:

Yo calmaré tu quebranto
y tus dolientes gemidos
apagando los latidos
de tu herido corazón.

El "doliente corazón herido" del poeta, en el que brotó siempre la sangre del cruento castigo original.

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TO PELT < DIALECTAL FRENCH EMPEUTER

By Leo Spitzer

ACCORDING to the *NED* the origin of the Eng. verb *to pelt* 'to strike with many or repeated blows (now, in Standard Eng., with something thrown); to assail with missiles' (attested since the end of the fifteenth century) is unknown. Skeat's explanation: from ME *pilt*, *pult* 'to thrust, push' (which verb is attested as early as the twelfth century)¹ is rightly rejected by the *NED* because "the difference of sense, and the chronological break between the two makes this origin very doubtful."

In view of the fact demonstrated by previous articles of mine (cf. *skulduggery*, *conundrum* etc.) that many Old French words of popular ring have found their way to England and have lived there an underground life for centuries before they found the opportunity to emerge in literature, we may be allowed to assume a similar case for *to pelt*.

Meyer-Lübke in his *REW*, s.v. **impellare* 'to graft,' cites the following representatives of this etymon reconstructed by him: "Prov. Catal. *empellar* 'to graft,' *empelt* 'a graft,' OF *empeautrer* 'to graft,' *empeau* 'a graft,' Bavarian-Austrian *pölzen*, *pilzen*, Basque *mentatu*," and concludes from this list that we have to do with a Southern Romance word area which extended itself both East and West into non-Romance territory, the Northern Romance equivalents of 'graft' being Fr. *enter* (< V. Lat. *impolare* < Gr. *ἐμπόρειον*) and *greffer* (*greffe* < Gr. *γρᾱφίον* 'pencil'). Among the Romance forms the OF forms listed by Meyer-Lübke are to us of particular interest: unfortunately neither an OF noun *empeau* (only a sixteenth-century and Mod. Fr. *empeau*) nor an OF *empeautrer* (sic!) are attested, but the sixteenth-century *empeau* presupposes the existence of such a noun in OF since it offers, in exact correspondence with Prov., Cat. *empelt*, the genuine phonetic development of V. Latin. **impellum*, a post-verbal noun derived from **impellare*, and, in addition, Gamillscheg was able, in his *EWFS*, to point to the Fr. verb (attested as late as 1789) *empouter* (in the derived meaning 'to arrange or distribute the strands of thread in the manufacture of silk') which shows the correct OF development of pretonic *-el-* to *-ou-* (cf. *delictus* > OF *dougié*), and to the dialectal forms *empeu*, *empeuter* attested for the Southwestern French province of Saintonge in the dictionary of Jônain: "*Empetú*, masc. une Ente, une greffe. *Empeuter*, enter. . . terme banal, pour construire, arranger quoi que ce

1. This verb, usually referred to an unattested OE **pyltan*, is explained by Latin *pultare*, a derivative, found only in Plautus and Terence, from a participle **pultus* which must have existed in ancient Latin along with the more usual *pulsare*. Since this archaic *pultare* has left no traces in Romance nor in medieval Latin it must be ruled out as etymon of the OE word. I suggest rather a verb **catapultare* 'to catapult' Lat. *catapulta* (< Gr. *καταβλήτης*) with apocope of the suffix *-cata-*.

soit." We may then assume that, while *enter* and *greffer* were the general Northern French equivalents of 'to graft,' the area of Northern French bordering on Provençal-shared with the latter language genuine representatives of **impellare*. If we remember that Saintonge (and Poitou, Anjou, etc.) belonged for centuries to the English crown, we shall not be surprised to find on English soil a certain number of words of Southwestern French provenance (a similar case is *nincompoop*, which is derived from altered forms of Fr. *hypochondre* attested in the dialect of Anjou). The Saintonge form *empeuter* is, in my opinion, precisely the etymon of *pelt*. The loss of the prefix is paralleled by *pester* < Fr. *empêtrer*, *boy* < O. Fr. *emboîé*, *curse* < Lat. *incursus*.² As to the semantic development, the transfer 'to graft' > 'to assail by blows' is in line with the many comic representations in popular language, of the act of beating by innocuous domestic activities carefully planned so as to reach their full effect: Fr. *planter un soufflet sur quelqu'un*, Eng. *to plant blows on sb.* (NED, s.v. *plant*, Vb. no. 7: 'to deliver [a blow, stroke, thrust] with a definite aim,' a "colloquial use, of slang or vulgar origin"). Exact parallels to my suggestion of a semantic transfer 'to graft' > 'to assail by blows' are extant in OF, cf. Tobler-Lommatzsch, *Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch*, s.v. *enter* (= 'to graft') 'Streich versetzen' (*Roman d'Alexandre*: "Et li ber Floridas maint ruste cop i ente," literally "Floridas [en] grafts here many a hard blow"), and in German, cf. *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, s.v. *pfropfen* 2 ('to fill, stuff,' a meaning derived from that of *pfropfen* 1 'to (en)graft' < Lat. *propaginare*): 'stossen, stupfen,' attested with Hans Sachs (cf. Nürenberg, *einem einen pfropf beibringen* 'einen heimtückischen Stoss versetzen').³ The original construction must have been **to pelt a blow on sb.* 'to graft a blow on sb.,' but, just as in the case of *to imp* (originally = 'to graft') the construction *to imp feathers into a wing* (a bird) was changed into *to imp a wing* (a bird) *with feathers*, or in the case of *to implant*, the construction *to implant something into the ground* gave way to *to implant the ground with something*, we must assume that *to pelt sb. with blows*, the only construction attested in English, is the successor of an older one **to pelt a blow on sb.* The fact that both the original meaning of *to pelt* 'to graft' and the original construction **to pelt a blow on sb.* are not attested in English should not, I think, shake our confidence in the etymon *(*im*)*pellare*, since my hypothesis implies

2. The German and the Basque forms may point to a simple verb **pellare* which would be comparable to the simple verbs Fr. *écussonner*, Swiss German *schilden* which we shall mention below.

3. This second parallel is not quite sure, however, since the meaning 'to assail by blows' could be an extension of 'to stuff' (and Kluge-Götze suggest that *pfropfen* 2 'to stuff' is originally an independent verb of onomatopoeic origin which was only influenced by *pfropfen* 1 'to graft'). Cf. also Germ. *pelzen* 'to graft' > *einen* (aus-, ab-, durch-) *pelzen* 'to strike sb. with blows' (usually felt as belonging to *Pelz* 'fur' as the translation by Sanders shows: 'den Pelz ausklopfen, prügeln'), *einem etwas aufpelzen* 'aufhalsen, aufbürden, auf den Pelz oder Lieb wälzen.'

for our verb centuries of underground life before its appearance about 1500.

As to the origin of V. Lat. **impellare* I still prefer to other theories (a contamination **imputare* + *impellere*, Meyer-Lübke; **impellitare* from *pellitus* 'covered with a hide': 'to cover, protect young plants' > 'to graft,' Gamillscheg; **impellitare*, from *impellere* 'to drive in' > 'to graft,' Brück) my suggestion (in *ZRP*, XLVI, 613, and *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen* CLXII, 231) of a derivation from the Gr.-Lat. word *pelta* 'light shield' (cf. Fr. *greffer en écusson*, *écussonner*, Eng. *to graft in the (e)scutcheon*, in the *shield*, Swiss German *schilden*), the 'shield' in this case being 'a piece of bark cut more or less in the form of a shield, and bearing a bud, for grafting between the wood and the bark of a stock' (*NED*)—a hypothesis which has been accepted by Kluge-Götze and Dauzat. The fact that the noun *pelta* from which **impellare* must be derived has not survived in Romance in the meaning 'a graft' does not contradict my etymology: the *REW* contains many cases of the type **incolicare* (no. 4360), *inodiare* (no. 4448), **involare* (no. 4538) in which derivative verbs have survived in Romania while the stem-nouns *colus*, *odium*, *vola* have left no trace in the same group of languages.⁴

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4. Gaston Paris, *R.*, XVII, 103, suggested that Lat. *pelta* 'shield' may survive in Fr. *peautre* 'rudder,' attested since the fourteenth century as a term of the mariners navigating on the Loire river—an explanation accepted by Meyer-Lübke in the first, but not in the last edition of the *REW*.

REVIEWS

Initiation und Wandlung. Zur Geschichte des altfranzösischen Romans im zwölften Jahrhundert von Chrétien de Troyes zu Renaut de Beaujeu. By Antoinette Fierz-Monnier. (Studiorum Romanicorum Series Turicensis, Volume V.) Bern: A. Francke AG Verlag, 1951. Pp. 223.

The author of this thesis begins by giving, in some 80 pages, a structural analysis of Chrétien de Troyes' five courtly novels. She continues by doing the same, in more detail, for Renaut de Beaujeu's *Bel Inconnu*. She not only expounds the general symbolism of these works, but explains the meaning of every adventure, establishing, in this way, a gradual education and development of the heroes concerned. In this bold undertaking, she is guided by modern psychological methods of interpreting myths and symbols. It is not easy to convey an impression of her method to English readers since the German terms lose, in translation, much of their very specific flavor. Still, I shall try to give a few examples.

Perceval comes from the deserted woods, from the mother, from nature ("vom Naturhaften her"); his way leads to spiritual form, to courtly civilization; Gauvain's way, on the contrary, first leads him away from form, towards natural life ("zum naturhaften Menschen"), and afterwards to a synthesis of the two opposites.

In the *Bel Inconnu*, there is a little white dog playing a part in one of the adventures; it has black ears and a black spot on its right side, and one of its paws is wounded by a thorn. The dog symbolizes earthbound instinct, a function helpful to mankind, of involuntary ("triebhaft") character. Since it has a thorn in its paw, instinct is checked, not free to act; the black spots indicate that the instinct contains something obscure and ominous ("untergründig"), a blemish which may be due to incomplete domestication. The meaning of the first three adventures of the *Bel Inconnu* is resumed, on page 138, in the following italicized sentence: *Es ist die Auseinandersetzung des Individuums mit der traditionellen geistigen Einstellung, mit der primitiven Triebnatur, und die Behauptung der individuellen Tat gegenüber der Gesellschaft.* (It is the struggle of the individual against traditional mental behavior, against primitive instinctive nature, and the vindication of individual action against society.)

The author has a thorough knowledge of French courtly epics, and she has read many of their modern commentators. But otherwise, her horizon in medieval literature is rather narrow, and she is not familiar with the different traditions of medieval symbolism. It would be, of course, very unfair to object to a thesis because of such limitations, were it not that the task of explaining hidden meanings in medieval literature requires some familiarity with allegorical and similar traditions. The consequence is not only that she overlooks possible meanings, but that she takes things for

granted which are open to serious doubt. She does not ask herself (indeed, other more experienced scholars did not either), whether and on what authority we are entitled at all to assume, that poems such as those of Chrétien and Renaud have an explainable hidden meaning? This is not sufficiently proved by the undeniable fact that different and heterogeneous symbolic traditions survive in these works. Nor does the author explain to her readers, whether she supposes Chrétien and Renaud to have had in their minds something corresponding to her interpretations, and whether they intended their listeners to understand the works accordingly. It seems to me that it is quite impossible. These interpretations are indissolubly connected with very modern forms of thinking and with a newly created terminology; no man around 1300 (I could have said here, no medieval man, but I prefer to avoid "den mittelalterlichen Menschen") could think, feel, talk in that way, or in a similar way, no more than he could invent a cyclotron.

But it may well be that the author attributes a great deal of her interpretations not to a conscious intention of the medieval poets, but to their subconscious trends. Even then, the philologist has to verify his assertions through his author's text, were it in some indirect way; there must be, in the text, passages which betray the author's subconscious meaning. Mrs. Fierz-Monnier does not try to support her explanations in that way. She sometimes quotes texts, and resumes, correctly and skillfully, their literal meaning. But when it comes to deeper meaning (and it comes to that very soon), she just asserts: "Es handelt sich um ein weibliches, übernatürliches Urbild, das hinter jeder Frauengestalt, der ein Mann begegnet, aufleuchtet . . ." (page 182). Consequently she often deprives the passages of their charming concreteness in favor of rather dull and insipid generalities—and sometimes, she neglects the most characteristic features. In her analysis of the central adventure, the kiss of the serpent (page 167), she rightly observes that it is a turning point; the hero no longer dominates the events by his activity, he lets things act on him. But there is no mention, in this analysis, of his attempts to act: four times he tries to draw his sword; each time he is paralyzed by the serpent's humble bow—the very core of this strangely impressive scene, it seems to me. Nor does the author notice the importance of the first word she quotes: *Atant*. The serpent appears just at the moment when the *Biaus Desconetis* repents of having abandoned the *Damoisele* as *Blances Mains*, and vows to be forever faithful to her. How is it possible to neglect a point so much in support of one's own ideas? Afterwards, the author interprets the following events as "namegiving, i.e. baptism" (page 169). So far as I can see, there is no namegiving, but revealing of a name hitherto unknown to its bearer (and even if it were namegiving, one cannot simply identify it with baptism.) The verse in question, 3220, reads: "Guinglains as non en batestire." That means, it seems to me: the name given to you, when you were baptized, is Guinglain;

neither that the kiss means baptism, nor that the name is being given now. A little later, we find a discussion of the general symbolic value of the serpent. Such subjects require more specialization, but I may observe that the serpent can mean Christ as well as the devil ("serpens exaltatus in deserto," Num. 21, quoted by the author herself in note 138); the "conjunctio oppositorum" (Augustine calls it "contraria significatio") is a very constant phenomenon in Christian typology. A few other details: I do not think, that the guardian of the ford (page 126, vv. 331-335) plays chess himself; his two *vallés* do, he looks on. In the second quotation from Dieterich (page 167), Dieterich himself quotes I Cor. xv. 20.

It may be necessary to emphasize that I am not opposed to the use of modern psychological methods for the interpretation of symbols and symbolic meaning. But for medieval tests, it cannot be done without some knowledge of medieval tradition, and without remembering, at each step, that the main task of the philologist is to understand as closely as possible what the text says. Thus this intelligent little book, in spite of its remarkable *esprit de suite*, seems to me unconvincing.

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Sonnets of Louise Labé, "La Belle Cordière." Translated into English verse by Alta Lind Cook. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950. Pp. xiv + 49. 4 plates.

It is easy to understand how these poems should attract translators, being a compact self-enclosed group of twenty-four sonnets with an immediate impact of emotional intensity. It is a little more surprising that another publisher should issue them just three years after the Prokosch version (previously reviewed here). But since in the inevitable imperfection of translations of poetry there can never be too many versions to compare, one is grateful for the boon.

This version has as its most apparent virtue a fluent smoothness. Read by themselves, the English poems rarely have much drive but they almost always move along reasonably and sensibly. What they lack seems to me to have two main causes, one a matter of temperament (of which below) and the other the translator's highly respectable decision to keep the octave rhyme scheme with only two end-sounds. Though this is literally accurate, it gives one pause to recall that Louise Labé's contemporaries, the first great English sonneteers, shifted almost at once to four end-sounds when they imported the form and that the English sonnet has generally kept them since. This amendment in the English Renaissance would go far to justify the same in translating French Renaissance sonnets, and even more when one considers the reasons for it. It is more difficult to rhyme in English than in Romance Languages, and extended repetition of one end-sound produces on us an effect of doggerel.

Here the main effect is of course that the translations are in every other respect far less accurate than they might otherwise have been. One of the obvious first effects is that the relative location of phrases in sentences has often to be changed, and particularly run-over lines must be as frequent as they are rare in the original. This dislocates the tone and structure of the sonnets more than one might suppose. For their power, it seems to me (perhaps it is a quality general to sonnets of their age) comes from the simultaneity of overweening rushing emotion, the factor that first attracts our late romantic tradition, with a less modern severity of formal construction and brainy logic. Thus it is important, for instance, that most stanzas are autonomous, building each on the solid basis of statements established in those before. The run-overs blur this effect, emphasizing the emotional at the expense of the classic pole and making the new poems less associable with Francis Bacon than with Thomas Wolfe. If this natural tendency is less marked here than in Prokosch, it is because he is himself a skilled romantic verbalizer, while these versions seem in comparison domestically mild. An example:

Oh si j'estois en ce beau sein ravie
De celui-la pour lequel vois mourant:
Si avec lui vivre le demeurant
De mes cours jours ne m'empeschoit envie:

Si m'acollant me disoit, chere Amie,
Contentons nous l'un l'autre, s'asseurant
Que ja tempeste, Euripe, ne Courant
Ne nous pourra desjoindre en notre vie. . .

If only I might lie upon the breast
Of him for whom I think that I must die
Because of loving; if I could deny
The sweet desire to live with him the rest

Of my short days; if to his heart he pressed
Me saying, Dear one, you and I
River and tide and tempest can defy
To part us: let us love then undistressed. . .

It will be observed how this pattern makes the breath catch awkwardly in reading aloud, and also harder to grasp at first scanning than the original.

Little is to be gained from a catalog of redoubled and thus diluted adjectives, gratuitous additions for rhyme and other various padding which appear in the usual amounts. There should perhaps be citation of a certain number of mistakes, either transliterated *faux amis* or deriving from apparent ignorance of Renaissance objects and ideas. "Clere Venus" ought not to be "Clear Venus"; to translate "du corps l'ame sutile part" as "soul

from body leaves in subtle flight" seems to show puzzlement over *sutile*; "Tousjours suis mal, vivant discrettement" is foolish as "I suffer always when I live discreetly"; "Masques, tournois" as "masking, games" (instead of masquing) is at least ambiguous; "Sans la beaute d'Adonis acuser" as "beauty of Adonis to accuse" seems a blunder and produces no sense. But these are trifles; similar, but more distressing, are the turns of speech not definite errors which incline to reduce precision to gooeyness. A simple example is "sa fureur divine" as "Divinely, madly." A more complex one, obviously revelling in poetic effect, is "Tu le rendois tout soudein lamentable" as "Thou hast refashioned it to a repining," where the need for a rhyme is also guilty. As one will, I have tried retranslating one bit to suggest that simplicity might bring power out of this melting effect. (I use half-rhymes, which I consider the best way to avoid doggerel, maintain the original pattern of only two end-sounds, and give more possible rhyme-words.) Thus:

O beaus yeus bruns, o regars destournez,
O chaus soupirs, o larnes espandues,
O noires nuits vainement atendues,
O jours luisans vainement retournez...

is in the book:

O dark and lovely eyes, O heedless gaze,
O burning sighs, O tears that fall as rain,
O sombre nights awaited all in vain,
O vain return of sun and shining days...

while in preliminary form a revision might read something on this order:

O fair brown eyes, O, their avoiding gaze,
O the hot sighs, and O the tears expended,
O the black nights, so fruitlessly awaited,
O fruitlessly returning brilliant days...

At its worst the strain toward soft passion of the basic mild and domestic approach leads to a kind of prim bathos, as when after first "fainting from the heat" ("J'ay chaut estreme"), later "I find, to my surprise, that pain is gone" ("Sans y penser je me treuve hors de peine"). It sounds like a placid lady reporting her operation.

Yet when some vagrant felicity removes all this the calm low key of the style, so in contrast to Prokosch, has its own values. A whole sonnet, perhaps the best, is quoted below in full. Typically it fails at the end, which dies away where the original built up a point of highly charged, exact inevitability. A last line violent with control would be something like "I

shall beg Death blacken my brightest day." But there is a good deal of Labé in all the rest of this poem.

As long as I can weep remembering
The happiness of other days with thee,
And sighs and sobbing still may leave to me
My voice, and someone hears me when I sing;

As long as hand upon my lute can bring
Sweet music forth to praise thy quality,
As long as this my spirit still may be
Content in thee alone for everything;

So long I never shall desire to die:
But when I feel mine eyes begin to dry,
My voice and unsure and impotent my hand,

My spirit, weary in captivity,
Without a sign of love at its command—
Come Death, cast down thy Shadow over me.

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Du Bellay, l'homme et l'œuvre. Par V.-L. Saulnier. Paris: Boivin, 1951. Pp. 167.

To assess a new book on Du Bellay is almost inevitably to compare it with Professor Henri Chamard's solid works: his thesis of 1900 and his *Histoire de la Pléiade* of 1939-40. Professor Saulnier's book, for which several penetrating studies in the poet had prepared us, stands the comparison well. It does not supplant earlier works, but it does far more than summarize them. Its limitations are mainly those of the size of the "Connaissance des Lettres" series.

On certain rather factual points where M. Saulnier differs with M. Chamard, one may wish that space had allowed him to present his reasons as fully as his persuasive and important conclusions. He regards the *Defence et Illustration* not as a collective work but as Du Bellay's own (pages 34-35, 49). He believes that the *Antiquitez de Rome*, the *Divers Jeux rustiques*, and the *Regrets* were composed not in sequence, but concurrently, during the years 1553-57 when Du Bellay was in Rome (pages 70-73). He considers Du Bellay's experiments in religious poetry in the early 1550's so promising and significant as to say (page 69) that but for the ordeal of his stay in Rome, Du Bellay would have become "notre premier très grand poète religieux."

Attitude and emphasis give rise to other differences in interpretation.

Less concerned than M. Chamard over Du Bellay's heavy indebtedness in the *Deffence et Illustration* and the *Olive*, he regards the former—properly, it seems to me—as above all a manifesto, and finds originality of treatment in both (pages 35–38, 49). He attributes Du Bellay's precedence in various genres not (with M. Chamard) to facility and speed, but to the restless imagination that drove the poet constantly to seek new fields, free from the shadow of Ronsard, that he could make truly his own (pages 60–65, 69).

Other differences reflect the two scholars' generations. Less judicious at times than M. Chamard, as in his almost unqualified praise of Du Bellay's personality and character, M. Saulnier is readier, as we have seen, to find originality even in an imitated theme; more hospitable to foreign scholarship (particularly American), which M. Chamard dismisses rather cavalierly; fonder of poets like Scève and Tyard and consequently of the poems in which Du Bellay shows their influence; and most important, more willing to give a critical judgment of Du Bellay's poetry.

In this major advantage of his book, to be sure, lies a minor disappointment. We expect little that is new of the first four chapters—"L'Homme dans le monde," "Les Œuvres de Coqueret," "Les Recueils romains," "Les Ecrits du retour"—and the Conclusion, "Le Destin du poète"; but we expect a great deal from the thirty-five pages of Chapter V, "L'Art personnel." Over half of this, however, is on matters that are not entirely central: "Du Bellay juge des auteurs," "Beaux-arts et nature," "Les Mythes familiers du poète"; whereas the most valuable insights might have been more fully developed and unified with a little more space.

Other minor reservations are these. M. Saulnier's Introduction promises excitement when he writes (page 7): "Le combat de l'homme et de l'écrivain, on voit assez qu'il représente, à nos yeux, le véritable aspect humain de la partie qui se joue." But this promise is not fulfilled in the rest of the book. He does not tackle a problem which, despite Vianey and others, invites fuller explanation: Du Bellay's double reversal on the poet's code from the *Deffence et Illustration* to the *Regrets* (II, 5–8; IV, 1), and from these to "Le Poète courtisan" (lines 22–24, 28–32), where the nonchalance he flays is expressed in almost the same words as his own code in the *Regrets*. The poet probably meant two very different degrees of nonchalance; but we still may wonder why he did not express them differently. Finally, though M. Saulnier warns us that the comparison and contrast with Ronsard can distort our vision of Du Bellay by making him seem facile and weak, he appears to fall into this trap himself when he concludes his book with a contemporary testimonial to the personality and character of a man whom we remember, after all, as a poet.

It is the pages that are devoted to the poet as poet, the beginning and end of the chapter "L'Art personnel," that are the freshest and most valuable. Du Bellay's extreme *sensibilité*, balanced and combined with

courage, constancy, and integrity; his patriotism; his strong moralistic vein; his eagerness and ability to blaze new trails: these are ably treated in the pages (116-121) on "Tempérament et desseins." "Le Don du vers" (pages 144-150) brings out excellently the concern for eloquence that makes Du Bellay more classic than modern; his "don du beau vers"; his power and solid craftsmanship, which can make the contrast with Ronsard misleading; his gnomic quality; the firm structure of his poems—sometimes too firm, but that is his way; his great gifts of harmony and internal rhythm; his masterful use of the cesura and other stops; finally the "teneur humaine"—hard to define but impossible to miss—that most of all guarantees that his work will endure.

Few if any of these qualities, especially as thus summarized, are new discoveries; but they are presented here together, lucidly and compactly, by a sensitive critic and scholar who has perceived them freshly and enriched them in making them his own. In so doing he has made his book not merely the best pocket-size Du Bellay, but a worthy addition to a valuable series.

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Molière et le Misanthrope. Par René Jasinski. Paris: Armand Colin, 1951. Pp. 327.

En dépit de commentaires innombrables, il restait beaucoup à dire sur le *Misanthrope*. L'ouvrage de M. Jasinski en pousse beaucoup plus loin qu'on ne l'avait fait l'étude méthodique. On mesurera le progrès accompli, si l'on compare la prospection enrichissante de M. Jasinski à la mise au point consciencieuse, mais timide et peu neuve, tentée par René Doumic dans une monographie consacrée au même sujet (*Le Misanthrope de Molière*, 1928).

M. Jasinski s'est proposé essentiellement de déterminer la signification profonde du *Misanthrope* telle qu'elle apparaissait à son créateur. Reprenant le problème par la base, il ne s'est pas cru obligé de suivre dans le détail les interprétations et les controverses qu'il a suscitées depuis bientôt trois siècles. Il ne s'interdit pas, pour autant, de faire les allusions nécessaires aux déformations célèbres ou curieuses que les intentions de Molière ont subies, ni de marquer fermement sa position à l'égard de certains de ses prédécesseurs; mais sa courtoisie évite les vaines polémiques et surtout les écarte pour arriver aux textes et aux témoignages qu'il entend interroger sans intermédiaires. Cependant, il signale scrupuleusement les érudits qui ont récemment trouvé des sources nouvelles et les historiens ou critiques dont les hypothèses présentent des affinités avec les siennes. Mais ce qu'il préfère visiblement, c'est aller de l'avant, seul, dans l'exploration hardie et enivrante d'un vieux chef-d'œuvre toujours jeune qu'il redécouvre à neuf.

Le plan adopté par M. Jasinski est déjà révélateur. Alors que d'ordinaire dans une pièce de théâtre on étudie, après sa genèse, son action, ses personnages, son style, M. Jasinski passe tout de suite de la genèse aux personnages, auxquels il consacre toute sa seconde partie, un tiers du volume. C'est que M. Jasinski, du reste friand d'analyses psychologiques auxquelles il excelle (on se souvient de sa subtile *Psychologie de Rodogune*), pense que l'étude des caractères est le meilleur moyen "d'atteindre à l'essentiel et de dégager... dans sa logique intime l'orientation de l'œuvre entière"; c'est aussi qu'il compte bien retrouver dans les êtres animés par Molière les traces de la vie personnelle de celui-ci, telle que la première partie l'a fait ressortir. L'étude centrale sur les personnages sert enfin de transition pour mener à ce qui constitue la véritable conclusion de M. Jasinski, le chapitre sur "la leçon du Misanthrope." Ce chapitre, le plus important, occupe la moitié de la dernière partie, au titre double: "Sens et valeur d'art," et qui se termine par un chapitre sur l'art de Molière, dont M. Jasinski nous dit qu'il s'y est limité aux trois questions essentielles: l'action, le comique, la poésie; si intéressantes que soient à ses yeux ces trois manifestations du génie moliéresque, il ne les traite que comme l'efflorescence d'une inspiration dont il a suivi la courbe de ses origines subjectives à son message universel par son expression dans des créatures de choix. On n'a pas cessé d'être dans l'humain, et c'est sans doute ce que M. Jasinski a voulu et qui donne à son livre sa résonance émouvante. Que ces trois facteurs psychologiques: l'âme de Molière, la vie de ses personnages, le message de sa sagesse, aient formé l'armature du livre de M. Jasinski, sa brève conclusion le confirme, qui nous dit que son interprétation a été "commandée par une triple logique: celle de la biographie, celle des caractères, celle de la leçon délibérément voulue." Selon lui, les éléments qu'il a dégagés forment, dans la réalité, un "faisceau"; il a voulu montrer leur "convergence." On ne saurait nier, du moins, que la synthèse vigoureuse de M. Jasinski témoigne d'une fermeté, d'une suite et d'une cohérence de vues très remarquable, d'une logique, selon son mot de prédilection, on dirait même d'une logique passionnée.

Il serait trop long de suivre celle-ci dans tous ses raffinements. Bornons-nous aux grandes lignes, ce qui permettra du même coup d'indiquer les points où la tactique de M. Jasinski rencontrera éventuellement des résistances. Je crois qu'elles porteront surtout sur ses trois premiers chapitres où il cherche dans la vie de Molière, dans sa vie sentimentale en particulier, ce qui a pu préparer l'éclosion du *Misanthrope*. Nous ne savons à peu près rien de certain sur les sentiments de Molière, ni même sur les événements privés qui ont pu l'affecter. Après la critique drastique de Michaut, les fameux "points obscurs" ont tourné aux points d'interrogation. M. Jasinski le sait mieux que personne. Il écrit quelque part: "En stricte logique, nous ne devrions que constater notre ignorance et nous abstenir de toute conclusion." Mais l'ardeur peut-elle se résigner à la carence? M. Jasinski

pense, d'abord, qu'on a poussé les négations trop loin. Ceci l'amène à restituer un certain degré de confiance à un pamphlet calomnieux comme la *Fameuse Comédienne* et à la biographie sans rigueur de Grimarest. Ces témoignages "comportent des erreurs, mais sans doute aussi une part de vérité"; ils "transmettent des traditions alors vivaces" et "se confirment parfois aussi très curieusement les uns par les autres." Il résulte de cette revalorisation que la position adoptée par M. Jasinski est beaucoup plus proche de celle de M. Abel Lefranc ou de Léopold Lacour que de celle de Michaut ou de M. Lancaster. M. Jasinski fait naturellement grand cas des pseudo-dialogues où Molière aurait confié ses chagrins intimes à Chapelle selon la *Fameuse Comédienne*, à Rohault selon Grimarest. Il admet que ces deux confidences sont romancées et ne s'accordent guère, mais il résoud ingénieusement leur contradiction en les plaçant à deux stades différents de la vie conjugale de Molière et leur authenticité profonde, sinon littérale, lui paraît garantie, comme à tant de moliéristes jusqu'à Ramon Fernandez, M. Pierre Brisson et même M. Georges Mongrédien, par leur "accent de vérité." J'ai bien peur que cet accent de vérité ne soit qu'un *effet*, de l'ordre de ceux du roman.

D'autre part, M. Jasinski, avec plus de raison, me semble-t-il, se refuse "au préjugé tenace d'après lequel la littérature classique... ne serait jamais personnelle." L'attitude réservée des écrivains du XVII^e siècle et l'absence de documents intimes ne doivent pas nous égarer. "De ce que le rapport entre la vie et l'œuvre n'apparaît généralement pas, nous ne devons pas conclure que tout lien se rompe entre elles... Une création dans l'abstrait, échappant à l'actualité vivante, purement intellectuelle et livresque, paraît invraisemblable en tout temps. Nous croyons pour notre part que nos grands classiques ont transposé la vie—leur vie—suivant un symbolisme autre que celui des écoles plus modernes, mais à travers lequel peut se discerner une réalité constamment proche." Il est curieux de noter que sur l'essentiel de cette position théorique, M. Jasinski n'est pas si loin de Michaut, qui trouvait infiniment probable l'existence de rapports entre un certain rythme de la production littéraire de Molière et un certain rythme de sa vie sentimentale (voir "Molière dans son œuvre," *Annales de l'Université de Paris*, mars-avril 1927, page 128). Seulement, Michaut exigeait qu'on allât d'abord de la biographie privée à l'œuvre (et M. Jasinski pourrait affirmer qu'il a ainsi procédé, du moins dans sa rédaction) et ensuite seulement de l'œuvre à la biographie, sinon on se livre à d'ingénieuses reconstructions. Or, aux yeux de Michaut, il était impossible d'utiliser la biographie privée de Molière, car elle est inconnue. Sur la pratique, nos deux historiens sont aux antipodes. Ayant retracé la carrière et les luttes de Molière jusqu'à l'achèvement du *Misanthrope*, dont la composition fut affectée par la querelle du *Tartufe*, les deuils dont Molière souffrit, ses relations avec la société libre de la Croix-Blanche, la campagne contre son *Don Juan*, l'hostilité de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne, son obsession de la médecine

et sa curiosité pour la physiologie, sa maladie, et enfin la crise de son ménage, M. Jasinski reprend, parallèlement, la vie amoureuse de Molière (Madeleine, la de Brie, la du Parc, Armande, les rivalités probables) jusqu'au moment où devant l'irrémissible inconstance d'Armande, il se résigne à une rupture, sans doute consommée en 1666, et à laquelle le *Misanthrope* se relie directement. "Sous le symbolisme, transparent pour les initiés, de la mésentente entre Alceste et Célimène, il a pu être conçu comme un avertissement, poursuivi comme une suprême exhortation, achevé comme une menace ou déjà la consécration d'un état de fait. Vis-à-vis d'Armande il a manqué son but. Mais il n'en a pas moins contribué à sauver Molière du désespoir. . . ."

M. Jasinski passe ensuite à l'étude des sources. On sait qu'il y réussit admirablement (on se rappelle sa mise au jour du récit du P. Caussin que Racine a eu sous les yeux en écrivant *Esther*; c'est M. Jasinski qui a retrouvé le sens de la "spongia solis" de Pascal). Bien que les sources livresques du *Misanthrope* lui paraissent d'une importance secondaire, il n'en montre pas moins que les réminiscences ou, du moins, les rencontres y sont fort abondantes. Il fait voir d'abord combien le thème central de la misanthropie, qu'il suit rapidement de l'antiquité à Shakespeare, a été renouvelé, approfondi et humanisé par Molière. Sur les thèmes secondaires (humeur querelleuse, politesse et sincérité, littérature, jalousie et coquetterie, prudence), il ajoute beaucoup à la moisson des commentateurs; signalons seulement le texte de René Bary, *Défense de la jalousie* (1642), et le factum de Félix de Juvenel, *Le portrait de la coquette*. . . (1659). Enfin, M. Jasinski recense les emprunts de détail les plus probables et il rapproche des œuvres antérieures de Molière les passages du *Misanthrope* où il s'est imité lui-même. Somme toute, la part d'inspiration livresque est plus large qu'on ne le soupçonnait, mais elle ne porte pas sur l'essentiel et est aisément dominée par la maîtrise de Molière. L'étude des sources vécues prouve qu'il faut éliminer les rapprochements superficiels (Eliante-Henriette d'Angleterre!) ou les réduire à leur juste mesure (Alceste-Boileau); en particulier, il est invraisemblable que Molière ait voulu prendre Montausier pour modèle d'Alceste. Bien entendu, on l'a vu plus haut, c'est dans sa vie que Molière a surtout puisé. Découragé, trahi, indigné de la déloyauté de ses ennemis, il avait glissé à la misanthropie. C'est, pour une part, un neurasthénique, accablé momentanément par une crise sentimentale, qui a conservé de l'espoir et n'a pas cessé de lutter jusqu'en 1665 où il atteint le fond de la détresse et où sa neurasthénie tourne en sentiment de la persécution. Alceste incarne ce désespoir. M. Jasinski retrouve dans Célimène le comportement d'Armande. Eliante ne peut pas ne pas ressembler à la de Brie. Arsinoé pourrait être une rivale inconnue, mais Molière a songé sans doute plus spécialement à la du Parc. Les personnages secondaires sont moins faciles à identifier, mais Molière a vraisemblablement exercé sa verve contre les soupirants de sa femme; le "grand flandrin de vicomte" est presque cer-

tainement le comte de Guiche (page 118), à moins que ce ne soit le duc de Luynes (page 47), etc. . . . Reste Philinte, qui n'est pas Chapelles, mais encore Molière, car, comme Musset s'est dédoublé en Octave et Coelio, Molière s'est incarné à la fois dans Alceste et dans Philinte, et peut-être plus encore dans ce dernier: plus évolué qu'Alceste, Philinte a dépassé le stade du découragement. Si Alceste représente le désespoir de Molière, Philinte est l'expression de sa raison assouplie et trempée par l'expérience. M. Jasinski nous donne à entendre que le secret de l'amitié de Philinte pour Alceste réside dans la tendresse de cœur qu'il a gardé pour la misanthropie dont il a goûté jadis lui-même la délectation morose.

Nous pouvons être plus bref sur la seconde partie. M. Jasinski y traite de la psychologie des personnages de la façon la plus fine et la plus complète, et presque toujours sans se référer aux assimilations qu'il vient d'établir. Sensible aux moindres indications du texte, merveilleusement attentif et nuancé, soucieux de marquer les liaisons et la hiérarchie des éléments de l'analyse, il trace une série de portraits d'une acuité et d'un fouillé exceptionnels. Sur chacun des trois personnages principaux, il projette un éclairage différent. Pour l'énigmatique Alceste, il fixe d'abord, au moyen de textes empruntés, non seulement à Furetière et au *Dictionnaire de l'Académie*, mais à des médecins contemporains de Molière comme Cureau de la Chambre et Pigray, ce que le XVII^e siècle entendait au juste par *misanthrope*, *atrabilaire*, *mélancolique*, *flegmatique* . . . et l'idée qu'on se faisait de la pathologie du caractère, et il montre que, de nos jours, Alceste serait classé comme neurasthénique. Il étudie ensuite la manière dont Molière a "typé" son personnage, par son rang social, par sa qualité d'âme, par l'emprise de la mélancolie, et il suit, en grand détail, l'évolution de son mal à travers ses phases principales: humeur chagrine, épreuves de la vie sociale (politesse, justice) et de la vie sentimentale (les défaites d'Alceste), dernières déconvenues qui achèvent sa "folie." Célimène est analysée dans un diptyque brillant et contrasté: coquetterie et grâce. L'interprétation de Philinte est une réhabilitation; on nous fait sentir ses vertus éminentes, trop souvent méconnues par la critique, pratiquées avec la délicatesse la plus rare et jusqu'à l'abnégation. Le chapitre sur les personnages secondaires commence par restituer l'atmosphère du salon de Célimène, silhouette ses familiers, et porte un jugement sur les tares de ce milieu raffiné et frivole. On notera qu'Oronte, qui est traité dans cette première partie de chapitre, ne se voit pas attribué un rôle trop considérable, tandis que M. Rudler en fait, avec une ingéniosité paradoxale, un personnage très important, surtout pour l'intrigue, le "meneur du jeu," "l'épine dorsale de la pièce," son "protagoniste réel" (pages xiv et xviii de sa substantielle édition du *Misanthrope*, chez Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1947). M. Jasinski montre ensuite l'importance du rôle d'Arsinoë dans l'économie de l'œuvre, détaille la complexité de ce type de fausse prude que Molière n'a pas inventé mais dont il a fixé les traits, et fait voir comment les deux caractères

de Célimène et d'Arsinoë s'éclairent mutuellement. Enfin, du rôle si court d'Eliante, mais qui se relie intimement à l'action et aux protagonistes, et qui est, en réalité, "un rôle privilégié," M. Jasinski tire le plus délicat portrait de l'idéal féminin selon Molière.

La cinquantaine de pages consacrées à la leçon du *Misanthrope* sont le sommet de l'ouvrage. M. Jasinski dégage du chef-d'œuvre de Molière un triple message. D'abord une leçon pratique, de bon sens populaire: c'est la mise en garde contre un défaut d'origine physiologique sur lequel la volonté a pourtant prise; ce conseil est précisé dans ses applications: minimum de conformisme à observer dans les rapports sociaux, attitude relativiste et conservatrice de soumission raisonnée dans le domaine des institutions, prudence et maîtrise de soi dans la passion, simplicité, sincérité et modération dans la vie mondaine. Cette sagesse, fondée sur l'expérience cherche, très classiquement, le juste milieu, prêche un conformisme limité et judicieux, qui évite la désadaptation et la soumission excessive, et affirme enfin le prix de la bonne humeur. La seconde leçon est plus subtile: "une sorte de contre-courant remonte, si l'on peut dire, les conclusions du bon sens," la sympathie que nous éprouvons pour les personnages dont nous blâmons les erreurs tempère la rudesse de la leçon réaliste par une leçon humaine. Reprenant de ce biais le personnage d'Alceste, M. Jasinski découvre dans sa générosité la source de ses erreurs, et c'est pourquoi son idéalisme et son désarroi éveillent en nous des échos profonds et des attractions secrètes. "Pour les initiés, enfin, par un jeu savant d'allusions plus ou moins voilées," Molière laisse affleurer une leçon philosophique. M. Jasinski nous le montre lié aux rationalistes à tendance plus ou moins libertine, inclinant vers un naturalisme assez hardi pour son temps, respectueux extérieurement de la religion dans une œuvre dont les silences sont pourtant révélateurs, car "il prêche . . . toute une sagesse . . . qu'aucun rappel, aucune allusion ne relie à la foi," suivant, surtout, entre le stoïcisme déclinant, que le *Misanthrope* réfute peut-être implicitement, et l'épicurisme, dont Molière a quelque peu subi l'influence mais dont il répudie la mollesse, les suggestions du scepticisme chrétien. M. Jasinski ajoute ici aux rappels de M. Sells de très nombreux textes de La Mothe Le Vayer. Le thème central du *Misanthrope* est en accord étroit avec celui de la *Prose chagrine* (1661); ses thèmes secondaires se retrouvent un peu partout dans les *Œuvres complètes*, qu'il s'agisse de la sincérité intégrale, de la soif d'éloges des poètes amateurs, du refus de louer ou de celui de visiter les juges, de l'humeur jalouse, etc. . . , avec "d'innombrables rapports d'expression." S'il n'y a pas à chaque fois source littéraire, "la multiplicité des concordances prouve une étroite parenté de doctrine." On voit ici que, si M. Jasinski n'a pas rejeté dans le chapitre des sources cette impressionnante confrontation de textes, c'est qu'il entendait la réserver pour éclairer le sens profond du chef-d'œuvre de Molière. Celui-ci met vraiment à la

scène "une allégorie philosophique" qui dépasse de loin la simple morale et qui achève de définir celle-ci :

Elle repose comme chez La Mothe le Vayer sur un fond de scepticisme, donc de pessimisme. Elle voit le monde mauvais, l'humanité corrompue. Elle révere pour la forme une Providence théorique, mais inefficace, inagissante. Sans rompre officiellement avec la religion, elle se détache en fait du christianisme; ou du moins de l'esprit chrétien elle ne conserve qu'une gravité volontiers assombrie et qui se ressent peut-être du jansénisme, sans faire intervenir tout ce qui dans la foi exalte ou console... Ce pessimisme glisserait aisément à une "mélancolie" d'autant plus découragée qu'intervient ici une question de tempérament... Molière met en pleine lumière l'importance des dispositions physiologiques... Mais il n'en aspire pas moins courageusement à un optimisme raisonné... Il prêche un optimisme tout humain. Il croit non à la toute puissance de la volonté, mais à la possibilité d'un effort efficace, du moins chez les mieux armés par l'intelligence et la trempé du caractère... il se fie peu à la bonté naturelle... Il croit... à une élite, restreinte, hélas! fondée sur l'aristocratie moins de la race que du cœur et de l'esprit... La vraie sagesse à ses yeux est moins détachement et contemplation que lutte perpétuelle... Ainsi, guidé par la Mothe Le Vayer, Molière aboutit à une morale toute humaine, libertine certes, mais au sens le plus élevé du mot. Elle ne heurte pas ouvertement le dogme ni la foi. Mais elle s'en passe. Elle s'édifie en dehors d'eux. Elle trouve en elle-même ses moyens et ses fins. Oui, les "dévots" pouvaient s'alarmer et les "esprits forts" saluer un des leurs...

M. Jasinski montre ensuite combien, malgré la netteté de la doctrine, cette position restait précaire, parce qu'elle représentait une étape instable et transitoire :

Tenue à des prudences ambiguës, incomplètement dégagée de la religion dont elle voudrait s'affranchir et mal affirmée dans les voies nouvelles, cette "philosophie" garde beaucoup des postulats chrétiens sans trouver les puissantes valeurs intellectuelles et sentimentales qui exalteront le siècle suivant... Toutes les discussions engagées sur la morale de Molière viennent justement de ce que les intentions précises ne s'en discernaient plus, hors du climat très particulier auquel elle répondait.

Dans son dernier chapitre, sur l'art de Molière, M. Jasinski caractérise d'abord l'action du *Misanthrope* : elle se soumet avec virtuosité aux exigences classiques, elle manifeste une logique profonde, n'use que de ressorts psychologiques d'une absolue nécessité, elle est concentrée au maximum, à demi abstraite, stylisée, de ton soutenu, spiritualisée par une haute leçon, elle tire un comique profond de sentiments pathétiques, elle est souverainement équilibrée et fait du *Misanthrope* la "comédie-type du classicisme"; vient ensuite une étude détaillée du mouvement de cette action dont on admire la sûreté de progression. Sur le comique et la poésie, sans prendre de position doctrinale sur leur essence, M. Jasinski distingue chaque fois deux espèces : d'une part, le comique de bonne humeur et le comique de

satire, d'autre part, une poésie de nature intellectuelle et une poésie de sentiment. De la poésie de Molière, il donne des exemples qui surprennent par leur abondance. Par contre, il y a fort peu de citations textuelles, deux ou trois, pour illustrer la partie sur le comique. C'est que M. Jasinski s'y attache plutôt à dégager les conditions auxquelles la comédie doit obéir pour ne pas sortir de son régime et à prouver que le *Misanthrope* ne les déborde pas, tandis qu'il passe assez rapidement sur les procédés comiques. Au reste, Molière, dans la plus sérieuse de ses pièces, "atténue les ridicules," tempère le rire ou lui substitue le sourire, fait "rire dans l'âme" comme disait Donneau de Visé.

Appuyé solidement sur l'histoire des idées et de la civilisation, armé d'une documentation largement renouvelée, analysant et jugeant avec la finesse d'un moraliste et la sensibilité d'un critique de grand goût, M. Jasinski a donné du *Misanthrope* l'étude la plus complète, la plus poussée, la plus suggestive et il l'a rendue vivante par l'élan, la chaleur, l'enthousiasme de son style entraînant.

JEAN HYTIER

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Racine et la Grèce. Par R.-C. Knight. Paris: Boivin, 1951. Pp. 467.

Ceux qui s'étonnaient et s'indignaient qu'un sujet d'un intérêt aussi évident que Racine et la Grèce n'eût pas encore donné lieu à un travail d'ensemble, seront doublement satisfaits par le gros livre que voici. D'une part, en effet, l'ouvrage qu'ils réclamaient est maintenant à leur disposition; et, d'autre part, ils s'étonneront moins, à mesurer l'immense labeur, la somme de connaissances diverses, l'amour et la patience qui ont permis de le mener à bien, qu'il ait fallu attendre si longtemps pour trouver un érudit remplissant toutes les conditions nécessaires, et riche par surcroît de courage, de probité intellectuelle et de goût.

On soupçonne que M. Knight a hésité devant le titre qui convenait à son livre. En fait, même un titre aussi général que celui qu'il a choisi fait attendre à la fois plus et moins que le livre n'apporte. Plus, en ce sens que les sept ou huit pages (pages 404-411) qui terminent son étude sont à peu près les seules à répondre aux désirs qu'exprimait il y a une dizaine d'années M. Henri Peyre, lorsque, signalant l'intérêt du sujet de l'hellénisme de Racine auquel travaillait déjà M. Knight, il précisait qu' "il faudrait rechercher . . . l'image que le poète de *Phèdre* se fit de la mythologie et de la religion grecques, et, à la lumière de nos connaissances modernes, réinterpréter les conceptions différentes de la fatalité et du tragique qu'eurent Racine et les Grecs, et les qualités rares et indéfinissables d'harmonieuse facture, d'évocation discrète, de grâce et de parfum dans la langue qu'ils possédèrent en commun."¹

1. *L'Influence des littératures antiques sur la littérature française moderne*, (Yale University Press, 1941) pp. 43-44.

La thèse de M. Knight apporte également plus qu'elle n'annonce, en ce sens que le titre ne prévient nullement le lecteur que toute la première partie (environ un tiers de l'ouvrage) traite, non pas de Racine, mais de l'hellénisme en France au XVII^e siècle. Ce travail, nécessaire pour bien faire ressortir l'originalité et aussi le conformisme de Racine, est fondé sur une vaste et savante compilation de travaux spécialisés et fragmentaires. Les conclusions auxquelles aboutit M. Knight n'étonneront donc guère les connaisseurs: on sait depuis longtemps que le XVII^e siècle a généralement ignoré le grec, que La Bruyère lisait Théophraste en latin et que l'hellénisme affiché par un Vadius était si exceptionnel qu'il valait à ce cuistre puant les baisers des femmes savantes. Cependant, les mises au point et les synthèses contenues dans cette première partie pourront servir d'utiles sources de références, notamment sur les traductions du grec disponibles à l'époque de Racine, sur le rôle de l'antiquité grecque dans le développement de la critique littéraire ou encore sur les influences helléniques et hellénistiques subies par le roman français du XVII^e siècle.

La deuxième partie de ce volume, consacrée à la culture grecque de Racine, est assurément la plus neuve. M. Knight essaie de retracer pas à pas les études grecques de Racine. Il recourt pour cela à diverses méthodes fort rigoureuses, notamment à la graphologie (deux planches hors-texte nous offrent onze échantillons de l'écriture du poète). Le lecteur est curieux de connaître les conclusions plutôt que les détails de l'enquête, et certaines pages,—par exemple, celles consacrées aux autographes de Racine ou à la coutume des marginalia à l'époque,—auraient gagné à être moins nombreuses. Les commentaires consacrés aux réactions de Racine devant la littérature grecque sont plus intéressants. On y remarque, par exemple, que c'est Homère que Racine aima surtout et avant tout. On s'étonne à ce propos que M. Knight ne mentionne pas le travail consacré en 1946 par M. Gaston-E. Broche à l'*Examen des remarques de Racine sur l'Odyssée*; mais la bibliographie de M. Knight ne paraît pas toujours être très au courant des travaux postérieurs à 1940. A propos de l'opinion de Racine sur la *Poétique* d'Aristote, M. Knight renvoie très opportunément à l'excellent petit livre de M. Vinaver² qui, comme il l'écrit si bien, est un "modèle, sur un terrain réduit mais fécond, de finesse analytique et de hardiesse d'interprétation" (page 10). Ce n'est qu'à la page 207 que M. Knight déclare: "Les annotations sur les tragiques grecs nous mènent... au cœur de notre sujet." L'auteur fait bien ressortir le manque d'objectivité historique de Racine qui "lit les tragiques en confrère rompu au métier" (page 223); qui "voit Sophocle et Euripide en fonction d'actes et de scènes, d'unités et de bienséances" (ibid.).

La troisième partie du volume est la plus intéressante, la plus attendue, sinon toujours la plus originale: elle examine le rôle qu'a joué l'hellénisme

2. Racine, *Principes de la tragédie*, texte établi et commenté par Eugène Vinaver, (Manchester University Press, 1944).

de Racine dans l'élaboration de son théâtre. Celui qui consacre une grosse thèse à Racine et la Grèce serait certes excusable d'exagérer à l'occasion les influences grecques subies par son auteur. M. Knight, lui, aurait plutôt la tendance contraire: c'est à une sorte de "deshellénisation" du Racine traditionnel que nous assistons à mesure que nous suivons avec M. Knight la carrière dramatique du poète. La *Thébaïde*, selon lui, "est plus près de Sénèque que d'Euripide, mais plus près de Rotrou que de Sénèque" (page 262); *Alexandre* "est un morceau d'histoire romancée au moyen d'une intrigue amoureuse inventée de toutes pièces" (page 263); *Andromaque* "admettait plus facilement que l'influence d'Euripide, celle de Virgile, de Sénèque, et d'auteurs modernes" (page 285); "les *Plaideurs* sont, évidemment et de parti pris, le contraire d'une pièce grecque" (page 288); "*Britannicus* et *Bérénice* sont 'romains,' et *Mithridate* est un épisode d'une des grandes guerres de la république romaine; *Bajazet*, qui interrompt la série, est oriental et moderne" (page 289). Certes M. Knight ne va pas jusqu'à prétendre que la littérature grecque n'est en aucune manière responsable des pièces raciniennes antérieures à *Iphigénie*, mais que "leur matière . . . est tirée de récits, anciens il est vrai pour la plupart, mais (sauf pour *Andromaque*) non dramatiques et même non poétiques" (page 325). *Iphigénie* et *Phèdre*, au contraire, "se donnent, et en somme avec quelque justesse, comme bâties, pour le plan comme pour les données, sur des tragédies toutes faites, des tragédies d'Euripide" (ibid.). M. Knight explique ce changement avec grande vraisemblance lorsqu'il suggère qu'il y a sans doute "lieu de situer dans cette pause de 1673-74 [qui sépare *Mithridate* d'*Iphigénie*] quelques-unes des lectures grecques de Racine dont ses notes marginales nous ont conservé la trace" (page 326). En tout cas il consacre fort naturellement aux deux dernières pièces grecques de Racine ses études les plus attentives et les plus longues (pages 298-322, 334-367). Quant aux pièces bibliques, M. Knight se range au jugement traditionnel, qui est déjà celui de Paul Mesnard qu'il cite (page 392): "jamais [Racine] n'avait autant ressemblé aux poètes antiques que dans les deux pièces sacrées où il paraissait avoir abandonné leurs traces."

Bref, le résultat est un peu décevant. On ne sait pas trop bien, du reste, si c'est à M. Knight ou à Racine qu'il faut attribuer cette déception. On ne reprochera sans doute pas à Racine de s'être proclamé plus grec qu'il n'était: le métier d'auteur dramatique a toujours entraîné les attaques, puis les ripostes (Racine s'y entendait), et à leur propos quelques petits coups de pouce à la vérité. On ne reprochera pas non plus à M. Knight de ne pas avoir cédé à la tentation d'exagérer l'hellénisme de Racine. Si on lui reprochait quelque chose, ce serait plutôt d'avoir consacré tant d'efforts, tant d'années et tant de pages à un travail dont les résultats sont si négatifs. Sans doute était-il utile, selon lui, de démolir la légende du Racine grec, comme on avait démolie une quarantaine d'années plus tôt celle du tendre

3. Il conviendrait d'ajouter la *Thébaïde* et les *Plaideurs*.

Racine. Applaudissons à cette exécution: rien de plus salubre que de secouer de temps en temps les préjugés critiques les plus solidement fossilisés. Toutefois, dans un cas comme dans l'autre, on court risque ce faisant de tomber de Charybde en Scylla, d'abandonner le Racine élégiaque pour le Racine anthropophage, le Racine lecteur d'Euripide et d'Homère pour le Racine lecteur de Gilbert et de Quinault.

Ce que M. Knight, me semble-t-il, a bien senti à plus d'un moment pendant son enquête, c'est que le sujet n'en était pas bien posé; que, tout en perdant les attributs grecs dont on l'avait affublé, Racine conservait la même physionomie mystérieuse; que donc cette question de l'hellénisme de Racine n'était peut-être pas une question plus essentielle que celle, par exemple, de son prétendu jansénisme sur laquelle on a tant glosé; que l'hellénisme n'était qu'une mauvaise clef de plus, qui ne parvenait pas à faire fonctionner la serrure du temple. Et pourtant, il semble bien que ce soit dans la culture de Racine que se trouve l'explication—si explication il y a, ce qui n'est pas sûr—de sa sensibilité et de son art. Si la clef janséniste et la clef grecque s'avèrent toutes deux inadéquates, ne conviendrait-il pas, avant d'abandonner la partie d'en essayer une autre: la clef latine, par exemple, qui n'a jamais été tentée avec précision? Plusieurs études spécialisées et limitées attendent encore les amateurs qui joignent au goût de Racine celui des lettres latines: Virgile, Horace, Sénèque, Tacite eurent sans doute sur l'auteur de *Britannicus* et de *Bérénice* plus d'influence, sinon qu'Homère, du moins que Pindare ou qu'Eschyle.

Un mot encore de l'aspect extérieur de ce gros volume: l'impression en est fort soignée et les fautes typographiques très rares pour un texte qui dut poser plus d'un problème aux imprimeurs.⁴ Je tiens, en finissant, à exprimer mon admiration pour la clarté et la correction du style de M. Knight. Swansea peut se flatter d'avoir un maître qui, tout en étant un brillant helléniste, est à même, en plus de sa langue maternelle, d'entendre et d'écrire le français "autant qu'homme de France."

GEORGES MAY

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Inventaire du fonds Vandeul et inédits de Diderot. Par Herbert Dieckmann. Genève: Droz; Lille: Giard, 1951. Pp. xlix + 282 + 1.

By a decree dated 5 December, 1951, "were classed as documents whose preservation presents for the history of the French nation a public interest," the manuscripts and original documents of the Stock Vandeul. These are what remains of the Diderot papers left to, or acquired by, Mme de Vandeul, Diderot's daughter, and since held and preserved, often "with crimi-

4. P. 149, *hésitation* pour *hésitation*; p. 243, *guidant* pour *guident*; p. 328, *quelques-unes* pour *quelques-unes*; p. 336, *cantonnade* pour *cantonade*. On s'étonne que M. Knight appelle tantôt Aristote le *Stagyrite* (par exemple, pp. 42 et 386), et tantôt plus correctement le *Stagirite* (p. 395).

nal negligence," by her heirs. Information concerning the papers has, until recently, been rarely and sometimes inaccurately divulged. A rough inventory made in 1913 was published by Hubert Gillot in 1937, as an Appendice to his *Denis Diderot. L'homme: ses idées philosophiques, esthétiques, et littéraires*. Before and after that inventory was taken, important manuscripts were withdrawn from the original holdings; that of "Le Neveu de Rameau," now at the Morgan Library, is a noteworthy example. The present *Inventaire* has been prepared with infinite pains and extraordinary erudition by Herbert Dieckmann, discoverer of the manuscripts. His services, not only to French literary history but to humanistic studies in general are great indeed.

The recovery of the papers at the château des Ifs, near Fécamp, from a closet, into which they were thrown in disorder at the approach of the German army in 1940, was not a matter of chance. Ever since the publication of his *Stand und Probleme der Diderot-Forschung* (Bonn, 1931) Professor Dieckmann had been assembling every bit of published evidence, building up a background of unexcelled bibliographical knowledge, and seeking out all persons who were known to have consulted the collection. Only thus could he obtain an interview with the Baron Le Vavas seur, be granted permission to seek out the manuscripts, bring some, then all of them back to Paris, and finally, because of the patent fact that no other man was so well equipped to form an inventory, borrow the manuscripts for two years of detailed study. Thus the precious documents came to America, not, as implied in an article of 5 January, 1952, of *Le Figaro Littéraire*, because America wanted to get hold of them, but because Mr. Dieckmann was a citizen and professor at Washington University, Saint Louis, which, together with the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, had helped to finance his researches. Only when the owner decided to sell, and the threat of dispersal became ominous, did several American Libraries consider purchase. That the manuscripts are now the property of the French National Archives¹ is due, in large measure, to Professor Dieckmann's fundamental honesty and perspicacity.

The publication of the *Inventaire* has rightly been hailed as a major event in the history of French letters. We now know in detail of what the Stock Vandeul consists and what aid it can give to the preparation of critical editions, and eventually the greatly needed reedition of Diderot's complete works. Lists of Diderot's manuscripts drawn up by his daughter reveal the works that have been lost or dispersed. The final third of the volume contains unedited texts.

In his Introduction, Professor Dieckmann describes the character and composition of the newly found deposit. Notes all too brief to satisfy our

1. Purchased with the help of the "fondation Singer-Polignac," the MSS will be deposited in the Bibliothèque Nationale (Decree of the President's Council of Ministers, 30 April, 1952). To Professor Jean Pommier is due the credit for this happy ending.

curiosity describe its recent history. The legend of Diderot's carelessness in regard to his manuscripts is contradicted, for he is shown to have been busy revising and arranging them for publication during his last years. After his death M. and Mme Vandeul continued the work, but conditions were unfavorable and publication was deferred. Future generations showed either lack of interest or active hostility.

The inventory proper is divided into sections, the most important of which are autograph manuscripts (major works, miscellanies, and letters), bound volumes of manuscript copies in various states of preparation for publication, and loose manuscript pages, many of which are especially important in tracing the stages of Diderot's thought and stylistic expression. It would be rash indeed to attempt here an account of the richness and detail of Professor Dieckmann's report. Many problems of relationship and chronology can be solved, if at all, by the close study of particular texts and the further identification of the copyists employed by Grimm, Diderot, and the Vandeuls. The aim of the inventory is to present a working instrument for those who are courageous enough to follow in the author's footsteps. Its fulfillment can be nothing less than a handsome reedition of Diderot's works, a final justification of his optimistic faith in posterity.

It is clear from the inventory itself that the unedited material printed here is only a sampling. Much of the rest can be presented only after considerable study of the texts involved. Of special interest is the defense of Abbé Raynal against Grimm, in 1781. The latter, as an old friend, could spend an evening with Diderot and his daughter, but could not hide the fact that years of court life had weakened his moral fiber and destroyed the common ground of ancient friendship. Diderot's case was different; bodily health might be failing, but the spirit still rang clear and strong. Other interesting pages show Diderot's opinions on time and creation, and, on another plane, the itinerary of his trip to Russia.

From the evidence of this inventory, two important works of Diderot stand in great need of revised presentation: the *Eléments de physiologie*, and the *Observations* on Catherine's legislative proposals. Other readers, however, may make entirely different choices. Further investigations would have been greatly facilitated by an Index, at least of proper names and major works, a lack made up in part by generous cross-references in the notes. Considering the immense amount of learning, labor, and love that went into this work, we can only again express our deep feeling of gratitude and admiration.

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Diderot. *Lettre sur les aveugles*. Edition critique par Robert Niklaus. Textes littéraires français. Genève: Droz; Lille: Giard, 1951. Pp. lxxviii + 124.

Students of eighteenth-century thought are indebted to Professor Niklaus for this critical edition of the most significant and crucial of Diderot's

earlier works. In addition to the convenience of the reprint (which itself fills a need), we have at last an accurate text, followed by the *Additions* and the exchange of letters between Voltaire and Diderot—the latter's reply in the complete version recently published by A. M. Wilson. The presentation and erudition throughout the usual apparatus of the critical edition reflect Niklaus' impeccable scholarship, although the notes do not attempt to be exhaustive and for critical bibliography we are referred to the recent work of Fabre, Venturi and others. Constant and precise reference to the original documents in the Bibliothèque Nationale and elsewhere is a useful feature.

Of principal interest is the lengthy Introduction. After resuming the circumstances surrounding the composition and publication of the work, Niklaus attaches it to the earlier stages of Diderot's intellectual development. His analysis is sagely based on the view "qu'il y a dans le tréfonds de la pensée même du philosophe coexistence de tendances diverses et qu'il y a péril à y mettre trop d'ordre." He notes that Diderot reflects the currents of thought about him, that his originality stems from his surpassing these through the (dialectical) interplay of his own contradictions. In this view, which Niklaus unfortunately does not develop, we have, in my opinion, the key to the interpretation of Diderot's evolving thought.

Niklaus next proceeds to tackle the *Lettre* itself, distinguishing the three facets of its structure: the psychology of the blind, the philosophical exploration, the Molyneux problem. The psychological aspect is not, however, without philosophical interest. Diderot is deeply concerned with the problem of knowledge, particularly with the effects of modification of the senses and their mutual assistance or substitution. The divergence of Diderot's conclusions here should perhaps be accented more sharply. On the one hand, his sensualism leads to a conclusion of qualitative differences in concepts between the blind and the seeing (page xxviii); on the other, he sees a common language resulting from sense substitution and the rational faculty the senses have in common (page xxvi). Niklaus brings out more clearly than ever before the originality, boldness and limitations of Diderot's speculations and suggestions. He praises Diderot's method as scientific and empirical; that this is not entirely so, however, becomes evident in the ensuing discussion (pages xxxvii, xxxix). Niklaus' solid understanding of the *Lettre* is best displayed in his reply to Villey's exceptions. Villey objects that the ideas of the blind are not modified by the absence of a sense—the same brain and mind lead to the same ideas; that the argumentation on religion and morality attributed to the blind is not theirs at all; that the main part of Diderot's philosophical reasoning is not in any way particular to the blind. To this Niklaus counters that Diderot is aware of the dominant role of reason in the process of knowing; that the absence of a sense does cause some modification in ideas; and that, in the philosophical development, Saunderson's role surpasses that of a blind man—he

speaks in the name of all men. To Villey's complaint that Diderot has written as if the blind lived in a society of blind men, Niklaus replies that this is precisely Diderot's intention—exactly as he will later create a "muet de convention"—in order to investigate the philosophical problems that are his chief concern.

The discussion of Diderot's philosophical ideas skirts questions of religion and concentrates on the theory of transformism. The law of becoming, the unity of nature, the dialectical process, adaptation and natural selection—all these are pointed to as Diderot's *very* remarkable contributions to the formation of a new materialism. Here this reviewer must take issue with Niklaus and other interpreters of Diderot. Close analysis of the crucial passages (pages 42–43), has convinced me that Diderot at this stage has no idea at all of the evolution of species, although his thinking is headed in that direction. Nature functions through a trial and error process in the production of a variety of forms, some successful, others not, but no transformism is involved. Matter spews forth its products as formed species that persist or die according to the viability of the combinations they embody. Variety results from the immediate creative process, not from evolutionary change. This is clear throughout, clearest in the sentence, "Je conjecture donc que, dans le commencement où la matière en fermentation faisait éclore l'univers, mes semblables étaient fort communs." Niklaus indeed seems to realize the weak ground on which Diderot's transformism is proclaimed. He admits that Diderot is still plagued by the old Lucretian mechanism. I suggest that the lines following the sentence I have quoted show that Diderot at this point has no other conception. Epicurean mechanism, while not evolutionary, is also not static, allowing for constant motion and recombination. Diderot doubtless places greater emphasis on the continuing creativity of matter, and is ready for a theory of transformism. His worlds that are continually being created, destroyed and recreated represent his belief in nature's unceasing dynamism, evidenced in instability and a neo-Heraclitean concept of change; but this is not transformism, since, like the ancient atomists, he makes no provision for the continuous creation of new forms arising one from the other.

Niklaus, brushing past Benoît de Maillet's *Telliamed*, emphasizes Diderot's priority in transformistic theory. Actually, Maupertuis had done his important work before Diderot reached a truly evolutionary view. Nor can we say that Diderot has, as yet, replaced mechanism with his "new materialism," founded on the sensitivity of matter and transformism. On the other hand, what seems to me to be the deepest significance of the *Lettre* is not brought out. The rise of modern science was partly the result of a change in metaphysical viewpoints. The growth of mechanistic biology was tied to the new belief that the inorganic and the organic are not definitely separate. Similarly, the development of psychology became possible only with the abandonment of psychophysical dualism. It is in laying the

ground for these new directions that Diderot's pre-eminence deserves greatest acclaim, rather than in the theory of transformism.

There are other details in Niklaus' discussion with which one might disagree. He probably exaggerates the contemporary influence of the *Pensées philosophiques* and the *Lettre sur les aveugles*. Like other scholars, he is not clear about Diderot's position towards spontaneous generation in the former work.¹ He correctly prefers to think that the *Lettre* was addressed to Mme de Puisieux rather than to Mme de Prémontval, but does not mention the rather conclusive evidence contained in A. M. Wilson's text of Diderot's letter to Voltaire. In the commentary on the *Promenade du sceptique*, Niklaus seems to miss the significance of the fact that Diderot does not reject, in his "Spinozism," the Cartesian dualism (page xvii). I think we should not attach much importance to Diderot's statement, preceding the *Pensées sur l'interprétation de la nature*, "Aie toujours présent à l'esprit que la Nature n'est pas Dieu, qu'un homme n'est pas une machine. . . ." Discussing the problem of Saunderson's final words ("O Dieu de Clarke et de Newton, prends pitié de moi!"), Niklaus shows that they too should not be taken at face value, but he does not indicate clearly what value we should give them (page xliii). In my opinion, they are an emotional expression of sincerity (cf. the apologue of the Mexican). I cannot follow the opposition Niklaus seems to make between Leibniz' law of continuity and the idea of the chain of beings (page xlv). The "novelty" of Diderot's experimental method is, I think, exaggerated. Finally, I do not agree that Diderot tended, even in theory, to side with Berkeley (page xlvii). Diderot's scepticism is not epistemological, but rational (*à la Montaigne*, as Niklaus admits); he denies not the reality of objects, but our ability to know their ultimate nature. Diderot's sharp condemnation of Berkeley expresses, I believe, his true opinion.

These criticisms of details are insignificant compared to the soundness of Niklaus' work as a whole. His edition is characterized by scholarship, subtlety, delicacy, judgment and restrained enthusiasm. It is a contribution of lasting value and usefulness.

LESTER G. CROCKER

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The French Education of Henry Adams. By Max I. Baym. New York: Columbia University Press, 1951. Pp. xiv + 358.

Few readers of this book will be inclined, after finishing it, to disagree with the author's statement: "in any account of Franco-American cultural relations, the Adamses must occupy an important place." For a century and a half, starting with John Adams and continuing through his son John Quincy, his grandson Charles Francis and his great-grandson Henry, mem-

1. See this reviewer's forthcoming article in *MLN*, "Pensée XIX of Diderot."

bers of this distinguished family were steeped in French ideas, which each interpreted and propagated according to his own sphere of interest and influence.

After reviewing this ancestral background briefly, Dr. Baym follows Henry Adams through the early stages of his intellectual development, first as an undergraduate student at Harvard, then as his father's private secretary at the American legation in London from 1861 until 1868. From that point on, the treatment is topical, rather than chronological.

Dr. Baym is successful in showing the effect produced on Adams' works and thinking by the three French historians, Michelet, Renan and Taine. He uses the markings found in Adams' personal copy of a translation of Michelet's history of France to demonstrate conclusively that the young assistant professor was greatly indebted to Michelet for the Syllabus of History II, a course which he taught during his first years as a member of the Harvard faculty. One clear instance of Renan's influence, among many others, is found in the very effective comparison drawn by Dr. Baym between *La Prière sur l'Acropole* and Adams' prayer to the Virgin at Chartres. As for Taine, Dr. Baym persuasively suggests that Adams was his disciple, as well as his admirer.

The longest chapter in the book is devoted to Adams' very extensive reading in the belles-lettres. It comes as no surprise to discover that the author of *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* was the possessor of an excellent library on French philology and that he was well acquainted with most of the medieval masterpieces. If one may judge by the titles of the works in his library, which have been carefully catalogued and collated by Dr. Baym, Adams' interest ranged over the entire field of French literature, from the *Chanson de Roland* to *Le Mannequin d'osier*.

This chapter, like the rest of the book, is impressively documented; nevertheless, it is, in the opinion of this reviewer, somehow less convincing than the other parts. It occasionally suffers from over-zealous efforts to establish Adams' knowledge of and relish for certain authors by means of a process which might be described as "putative association." Dr. Baym asserts, for example, that Adams was "concerned with poets like Verlaine," apparently basing his assertion on the fact that a friend of Adams published an article on Verlaine, that Verlaine is "mentioned" in *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* and that he is "referred" to in the biography of George Cabot Lodge. This is rather flimsy evidence, I fear, and most readers will probably feel that Adams expressed his real view of the French poet in the letter written shortly after Verlaine's death and quoted by Dr. Baym on page 163, in which Adams speaks of "Verlaine's expiring gnashings of rotten teeth."

The author affirms, on page 151, that Swinburne was "Adams' inspiring guide in French poetry." It seems a bit unfair to place the responsibility on Swinburne for Adams' taste in nineteenth-century French poetry;

whatever his merits in other fields, as a connoisseur of modern French verse Adams is decidedly unimpressive. His preferences curiously parallel those of his friend, Henry James, whose reputation as a critic is not enhanced by his remarks on Musset and Baudelaire. In fact, examination of the lines of Musset's poem, which Adams attempted to reproduce from memory (page 269), leads one to suspect that he was almost insensible to the rhythm of the French alexandrine; the sense of the original is caught perfectly, but at least two of the eight lines contain prosodic errors of the most elementary nature.

In the chapter devoted to Descartes and Pascal, Dr. Baym is once more on solid ground. Making skillful use of the marginal notes and sublineations in Adams' copies of the works of these writers, he shows that "in his oscillations between the *esprit de géométrie* and the *esprit de finesse* Adams leaned toward the latter." Dr. Baym has a most interesting observation to offer, on page 206, in regard to Adams' alleged conversion to Catholicism.

But it is the chapter presenting Adams as a "belated romantic" which, although it might at first seem outside the general subject of the book, strikes this reviewer as Dr. Baym's most valuable and original contribution to the understanding of Adams' complexities. The self-proclaimed "failure" of Henry Adams is shown there to be a pen and ink failure only, part of the ironic pose adopted by an artist who, to use Dr. Baym's words, "recapitulated here in America the whole romantic tradition of Europe."

There are many misprints in the volume, some so serious as to interfere with the reader's comprehension, even to arouse certainly unjustified suspicion of the author's thoroughness. A *lapsus pennae*, perhaps, rather than a misprint, is the reference on page 156 to Alfred de Vigny; the poem quoted is hardly in the manner of the author of *La Mort du loup*, but it does closely resemble the lachrymose style of Adams' favorite poet, Alfred de Musset. The title of Sardou's play, which is given on page 280 as *Les Poètes de mouche*, should of course be *Les Pattes de mouche*. There is no poem by Swinburne with the title, *Le Tombeau de Théophile Gautier* (page 25), although he did contribute six pieces (two in English, two in French, one in Latin and one in Greek) to a memorial volume published in 1873 under that title. (Dr. Baym was probably misled by the bibliographical note on page 287 of Welby's *Study of Swinburne*.) Admirers of Hugo will be startled to find him referred to as "the Satanist," on page 151; can it be that Dr. Baym so dubbed him on the strength of *La Fin de Satan*? There seems to be some confusion, also, between Dumas père and fils (note 308, page 278); Adams' phrase, quoted on page 178, obviously refers to the father, not the son, but works of both are listed indiscriminately in the note cited. The name of Lavedan is rather badly mutilated on page 181, where it appears as Lavenden.

Among other proper names which are misspelled are the following: Arnould or Arnoult (cf. pages 19, 236 and 339); Gautier, 32; La Fontaine,

113; Jaques, 116; Tuffran, 277; Salambô, 207; Werter, 211; Vuplian, 228; Altas, 303; Edgar Allen Poe, 356. As is frequently the case with books printed in this country, the French passages suffer most from typesetting errors: *medailles romains*, 128; *hymme*, 259; *dernières essais*, *tâche* (for *tache*), 149; *littéraires*, 166; etc. The index appears to be incomplete; Baudelaire, for example, is mentioned nine times in the main text (and three times in the notes), but there are only three references to him in the index. It might have been helpful to have extended the index to cover the notes, which contain much interesting material. In the bibliography, the title of Baldensperger's article is incorrectly quoted and *La Cathédrale* of Huysmans is inadvertently referred to as a French translation of *The Cathedral*.

The amount of space that I have given to the more or less mechanical defects of this volume is probably out of proportion to their importance. Lest the reader of this review draw a false conclusion, I shall add that, in my opinion, Dr. Baym's study is both informative and provocative. It will not fail to interest students of Franco-American literary relations, as well as admirers of Henry Adams.

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Francis Carco. The Career of a Literary Bohemian. By Seymour S. Weiner. New York: Columbia University Press, 1952, Pp. xvi + 274.

Je ne sais ce qu'il convient de louer davantage dans l'importante étude de M. Weiner; le choix du sujet, la conscience avec laquelle il a conduit ses méticuleuses recherches, le tact dont il a fait preuve dans le maniement de thèmes délicats? *Francis Carco. The Career of a Literary Bohemian*, il y avait là de quoi faire reculer les plus braves. M. Weiner accepta le défi, et une très honorable victoire a récompensé son courage.

Ce n'est pas le rayonnement d'un grand nom qui a poussé M. Weiner à consacrer ses veilles à l'étude de Carco. Il écrit même: "He would not be considered a writer of the first rank." Je ne suis pas de son avis. Je crois au contraire que l'auteur de *Jésus-la-Caille* est un écrivain de tout premier ordre. Ce n'est pas un Proust naturellement, ni un Gide, mais il est de la classe de Colette, par exemple, qu'il n'égale pas au point de vue du style, mais qu'il dépasse de beaucoup en tant que romancier. Ce qui a desservi Carco c'est la nature de ses sujets. M. Weiner l'a bien vu: "Carco has specialized to too great an extent in a society which is thought to be atypical, unusual and for some unworthy of major consideration." Mais, si l'on accepte que le "milieu" présente autant d'intérêt (sinon plus) que la bourgeoisie bordelaise et les propriétaires landais de François Mauriac, il faut placer Carco en tête de ligne.

Il méritait donc pleinement le labeur de bénédictin auquel M. Weiner s'est livré. Sur un auteur vivant Weiner s'est appliqué au même travail de

dissection que les aspirants au doctorat plus orthodoxes consacrent à des cadavres refroidis depuis des siècles dans leurs tombes abandonnées. Et cela est tout à sa louange. Quoi de plus stimulant pour un jeune érudit qui se destine à l'enseignement de la littérature française que de s'aventurer sur des terres que des générations d'explorateurs n'ont pas encore défrichées? C'est moins dans les archives et les bibliothèques que dans la vie elle-même qu'il faut diriger ses recherches. M. Weiner a non seulement vécu dans l'intimité de Carco, mais il a pris contact avec tous ceux qui l'ont connu, avec les détenteurs de manuscrits, de lettres. Puisant aux sources vives il n'a pas eu besoin d'émettre des hypothèses gratuites. On peut donc, je crois, se fier entièrement à toutes les informations qu'il nous donne. Cela est précieux surtout quand il s'agit des influences (par exemple ce que le roman *Les Innocents* doit à Catherine Mansfield). On pourra objecter qu'un auteur n'est pas toujours le meilleur juge de ses ouvrages et que les renseignements qu'il donne sur lui-même et sur son œuvre sont parfois erronés. La mémoire est toujours sujette à caution et les hommes ont un étrange pouvoir de dissimulation. Il n'en reste pas moins que des études comme celles de M. Weiner arrachent au néant une masse d'informations d'une valeur inestimable. Les témoins emportent dans la mort d'innombrables secrets. Grâce à M. Weiner, mille détails, non seulement sur la vie de Carco mais sur son époque, sur les milieux (littéraires et autres) qu'il a connus, nous sont désormais conservés. Je ne doute pas que M. Weiner ne sache beaucoup plus qu'il ne nous dit. Quand l'objet d'un travail très fouillé vit encore, on est tenu à une certaine réserve. M. Weiner est resté très habilement à mi-chemin entre la franchise et l'indiscrétion. Ce n'était pas facile.

Cela ne veut pas dire que *Francis Carco, The Career of a Literary Bohemian* soit un livre parfait. La lecture en est lente et ne va pas sans quelque monotonie. Cela tient, je crois, au fait que l'auteur a tenté, afin sans doute de ne pas dissocier l'homme et l'œuvre, de mener de conserve la vie de Carco et l'analyse de ses ouvrages. Par suite l'attention se disperse et l'esprit est contraint à un effort constant. Il eût été préférable, à mon avis, de se borner, dans le cours de la biographie, à mentionner les livres au fur et à mesure de leur parution pour en réserver l'étude approfondie dans une section à part. On aurait eu ainsi une vue d'ensemble plus claire, et on eût été plus à même d'estimer l'importance et la variété de l'œuvre de Carco, poète, romancier, critique, mémorialiste, analyste de l'âme étrangère etc. J'aurais aimé aussi, puisque M. Weiner a eu la bonne fortune de compulsier lettres et manuscrits, qu'il nous en fît profiter davantage, suivant l'exemple d'André Maurois qui, dans son *Proust* et sa *Lélia*, anime si agréablement son texte par l'abondance des extraits reproduits. Cela eût fait pénétrer un peu d'air dans des pages qui m'ont paru trop uniformément compactes. Mais, comme il n'est pas de mal d'où il ne sorte un bien, les notes bénéficient de cette opacité. La lecture en est si attrayante (pour ne rien dire de ce qu'elles nous apprennent) qu'on se surprend à faire l'opposé de ce que l'on fait d'ordi-

naire. On les lit comme on lirait le texte et l'on se réfère au texte come s'il constituait les notes.

De nombreuses illustrations et photographies achèvent de faire de ce volume un document d'une importance capitale. L'historien des lettres françaises contemporaines y trouvera une mine d'informations et bénira l'auteur d'avoir, pour lui faciliter la tâche, terminé son étude par une bibliographie aussi copieuse que bien ordonnée.

MAURICE EDGAR COINDREAU

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El fuero de Teruel. Edited by Max Gorosch. (Leges Hispanicae Medii Aevi, I) Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksells Boktryckeri, 1950. Pp. 667.

Based chiefly on Latin or Latino-Visigothic models, *fueros* were the law codes governing the inhabitants of Christian Spain at the time of and during the Moorish occupation. Although Latin versions are to be found for many *fueros* (the most widely known, the *Fuero Juzgo*, was translated into Castilian only in the time of Alfonso X el Sabio), they and the similar *cartas pueblas*, for reasons of convenience, were early put into Romance. Great impetus was given to copying and modifying these law codes as the Reconquest gathered momentum. Provisions were made for new situations arising and certain exemptions and privileges were included to attract settlers southward to populate the regained territories.

The some thirty different *fueros* which have appeared in various editions, collections, or fragments represent only a part of the great number of manuscripts which either are known to exist or may yet be "discovered" in local archives. While many of these unpublished works will undoubtedly be copies of known *fueros*, potentially they contain a wealth of dialectal linguistic data because, dating back to early Romance, they reflect the state of the dialects as they were written at the time.

In view of the foregoing this critical edition by Mr. Gorosch takes on particular importance, especially because of the antiquity and the extension of Teruel's *fuero*. The Introduction contains a description of the manuscripts used: two Romance versions, plus a Romance adaptation which was granted to the neighboring town of Albarracín, and two Latin versions. There has been no other edition of the *Fuero de Teruel*, although it served as a basis for a *Suma de Fueros* compiled in 1531. As is indicated in a concordance in the Introduction, Mr. Gorosch, in making his critical edition, utilized chiefly Romance manuscript A (from the second half of the thirteenth century), the lacunae being filled by the Romance manuscript B (fourteenth century) and the other versions where necessary.

The last fifty-seven pages of the Introduction contain a study of the orthography, the phonetics, the morphology, and the syntax of the text of the *fuero*. The language of the two principal manuscripts is essentially the same, having many Aragonese characteristics. Among these are: tonic

short *e* and *o* diphthongize even before a palatal, although the forms *foia*, *oio*, *noch* occur; *ue* has the variant *ua*; Latin initial *pl* and *cl* remain unaltered; intervocalic *d* is frequently preserved in words like *creder*, *crudel*, *frido*, *iúdez*; Latin initial *f* is maintained; *mb* is reduced to *m* (*amos*, *camiar*); final *e* and *o* sometimes fall.

Teruel was retaken in 1170, a time when the distinctive characteristics of Castilian were becoming fairly well established and regularized. Although most of Aragon is considered to have been castilianized from the fourteenth century on, Teruel was evidently near enough to Castilian for certain influence to be apparent in this *fuero*. For example, Latin *ct* is *ch* (*noch*, *pecho*, *ocho*) much more often than regular Aragonese *it* or *yt*; also Aragonese *ll* (*muller*, *mealla*) is far outnumbered by Castilian *j*, *i*, or *g* (*muger*, *miaia*, *abeja*).

The text herein edited runs to 304 pages and consists of 789 individual laws. The subject matter covers privileges, taxes, elections, conduct of civil suits, use of public property, rights of private ownership, marriage, military service, loans, rentals, hunting and fishing, business transactions, and punishments for all kinds of offenses. Some of the provisions even today seem timely, others quaint; for example, those relative to purchasing exemption from military service; or a year's tax exemption for the man who marries; or protection and responsibility for the mentally deficient; or varying punishments for the same crime committed by a resident, a stranger, a *judío*, or a *moro*; or punishment for graft in government.

The text of the *fuero* is followed by a detailed set of indices and a very valuable 218 page vocabulary. From the point of view of the historian, the sociologist, or the linguist Mr. Gorosch has done a great service by making available the *Fuero de Teruel*.

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